|| Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta ||

# || Yatharth Geeta ||

## The Geeta In Its True Perspective

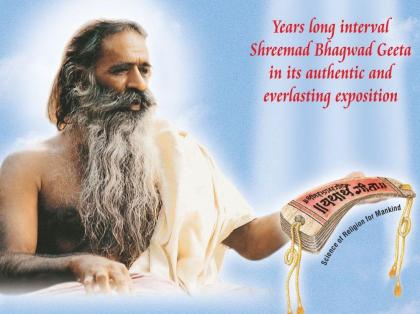
5200

*Years long interval*
*Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta*
*in its authentic and*
*everlasting exposition*

Science of Religion for Mankind
|| Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta ||

|| Yatharth Geeta ||
The Geeta In Its True Perspective

Swami Adgadanand

ENGLISH

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of the *Yatharth Geeta* is a saint who is bereft of worldly education, yet is internally organised by the grace of accomplished Guru, which became possible after a long practice of meditation. He considers writing as an obstacle on the path to the Supreme Beatitude, yet his directions became the cause for this treatise. The Supreme Being had revealed to him that all his inherent mental attitudes have been nullified excepting a minor one writing of ***"Yatharth Geeta".*** Initially he had tried his best to cut this attitude too, through meditation, but the directive prevailed. Thus the treatise, ***"Yatharth Geeta"***, became possible. Wherever mistakes crept into the treatise the Supreme Being himself rectified them. We bring forth this book with the wish that the swamiji's motto "The internalized archive peace" would become "peace for everyone at the end".

***Publisher***

**Science of Religion For Mankind**

|| *Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta* ||

# *Yatharth Geeta*

## The Geeta In Its True Prespective

Compiled and Interpreted through the blessings of
**Parampoojya Shree Paramhansji Maharaj**
by
**Paramhans Swami Adgadanand**

Shree Paramhans Ashram
Shaktishgad, Chunar Rajgad Road,
Dist. Mirzapur, (UP), INDIA.
Tel.: 05443 (238040)

What were the inner feelings & emotions of Shri Krishn when he preached the Geeta? All inner feelings cannot be expressed in words. Some can be told, some are expressed through the body language, and the rest are to be realized which can only be understood by a seeker through experiences. Only after attaining the state which Shri Krishn had been to, an accomplished teacher knows what Geeta says. He simply does not reiterate verses of the Geeta but, in fact, gives expressions to the inner feelings of the Geeta. This is possible because he sees the same picture which was there when Shri Krishn preached the Geeta. He therefore, sees the real meaning, can show it to us, can evoke the inner feelings and would lead us on the path to Enlightenment.

'Rev. Shri Paramhansji Maharaj' was also an enlightened teacher of such a level and the compilation of his words & blessings to grasp the inner feelings of the Geeta itself is the 'Yatharth Geeta'.

- SWAMI ADGADANAND

# Our Publications

| **Books** | | **Languages** |
|---|---|---|
| **Yatharth Geeta** | **❖Indian Languages** | Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Sanskrit, Oriya, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannad, Assamee |
| | **❖Foreign Languages** | English, German, French, Nepali, Spanish, Norwegian, Chinese, Dutch, Italian, Russian |
| **Shanka Samadhan** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, English |
| **Jivanadarsh Evam Atmanubhooti** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, English |
| **Why do the body parts vibrate? And what do they say?** | | Hindi, English, Gujarati, German |
| **Anchhuye Prashna** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati |
| **Eklavya Ka Angutha** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati |
| **Bhajan Kiska Karein?** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, German, English |
| **Yog Shastriy Pranayam** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati |
| **Shodasopchar Poojan Padhati** | | Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati |
| **Yog Darshan** | | Hindi |
| **Glories of Yog** | | English |

## Audio Cassettes

| | |
|---|---|
| **Yatharth Geeta** | Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, English |
| **Amrutvani** (Rev. Swamiji's Discourses Vol.1-51) | Hindi |
| **Guruvandana (Aarti)** | |

## (MP3) - CDs

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| **Yatharth Geeta** | Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, English |
| **Amrutvani** | Hindi |

## Audio CDs

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| **Yatharth Geeta** | German |

***DEDICATED***

with profound reverence
to
the holy memory
of
the immortal, blessed, supreme yogi,
and the most exalted

**SHREE SWAMI PARMANAND JI**

of

**Shree Paramhans Ashram Ansuiya**
(Chitrakoot)

# GURU VANDANA

## (SALUTATIONS TO THE GURU)

II Om Shree Sadguru Dev Bhagwan Ki Jai II

Jai Sadgurudevam, Paramaanandam,
amar shariram avikari I
Nigurna nirmulam, dhaari sthulam,
kaatan shulam bhavbhaari II

surat nij soham, kalimal khoham,
janman mohan chhavidhaari I
Amraapur vaasi, sab sukh raashi,
sadaa ekraasi nirvikaari II

Anubhav gambhira, mati ke dhira,
alakh fakira avtaari I
Yogi advaishta, trikaal drashta,
keval pad anandkaari II

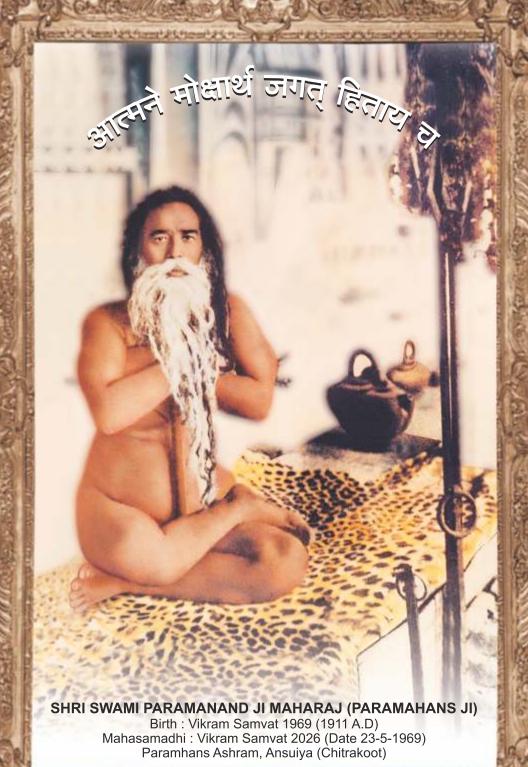
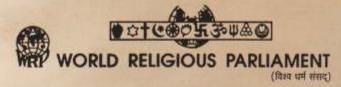
Chitrakutahi aayo, advait lakhaayo,
anusuia asan maari I
Sri paramhans svami, antaryaami,
hain badnaami sansaari II

Hansan hitkaari, jad pagudhaari,
garva prahaari upkaari I
Sat-panth chalaayo, bharam mitaayo,
rup lakhaayo kartaari II

Yeh shishya hai tero, karat nihoro,
mo par hero prandhaari I
Jai Sadguru ........ bhari II

।। ॐ ।।

**SHRI SWAMI PARAMANAND JI MAHARAJ (PARAMAHANS JI)**
Birth : Vikram Samvat 1969 (1911 A.D)
Mahasamadhi : Vikram Samvat 2026 (Date 23-5-1969)
Paramhans Ashram, Ansuiya (Chitrakoot)

Shri Swami Adgadanandaji Maharaj

C-121, KIRTI NAGAR, NEW DELHI - 110 015 (INDIA).

## विश्वगौरव सम्मानपत्र

वेदवेदांग आयुर्वेद ज्योतिषादि शास्त्रपरम्परासुरक्षाव्रती, अखिल संस्कृतवाङ्मयसंरक्षण—प्रचार—प्रसारपक्षधर आर्षसनातनमर्यादाजीवनपद्धतिसदाचारपरायण, "सर्वभूतहिते रतः—वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्" के सद्भावना पर्यावरण से ओतप्रोत,

सम्माननीय श्री स्वामी अड़गड़ानन्द जी महाराज - परमहंस आश्रम

निवासी शक्तेशगढ़ चुनार (मिर्जापुर) को

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय अधिवेशन में विश्वगौरव सम्मानपत्र से विभूषित किया जाता है।

एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः।
स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः।

*World Religious Parliament is pleased to confer*
*The Title of Vishwagaurav*
*In recognition of his meritorious contribution for World Development*
*through* श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, धर्मशास्त्र, (यथार्थगीता)
दिनांक कुम्भ मेला 10-4-98 हरिद्वार

*Chairman* (आचार्य)
*Presentation Committee*

*Acharya Prabhakar Mishra*
*Chairman*
*World Religious Parliament*

**'Pride of World'** Title was conferred on reverend Swamiji by World Religious Parliament on the occasion of last Mahakumbh of the century at Hardwar in the presence of all Shankeracharyas, Mahamandaleshwaras, Members of Brahman Mahasabha and Religious Scholars of forty four countries.

# विश्व धर्म संसद्

## WORLD RELIGIOUS PARLIAMENT

C-121, KIRTI NAGAR, NEW DELHI 110 015 (INDIA)

### सम्मान प्रमाणपत्र

"शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्" के मौलिक सिद्धान्तों पर आधारित विश्व में निरोगसमाज की स्थापना तथा शारीरिक मानसिक बौद्धिक सामाजिक स्वास्थ्य की उपलब्धि के लिए प्रयत्नशील एवं बाह्य तथा आन्तरिक पर्यावरण की स्वच्छता के लिए संकल्पित विश्व धर्मसंसद् प्राच्यअर्वाच्य ज्ञान विज्ञान की किसी भी शाखा के माध्यम से मानवता की सेवाओं में समर्पित व्यक्तियों को सम्मान करने में गौरव समझती है।

इसी धारणा-अवधारणा के दृष्टिकोण से उल्लेखनीय ज्ञान तथा सेवाओं के लिए श्री विश्वमानव को एक धर्मशास्त्र दाता विश्वगौरव स्वामी अड़गड़ानन्द जी को यथार्थ गीता धार्मिक क्षेत्र/विषय में विश्वगुरु सम्माननीय उपाधि से सम्मानित तथा जनसेवा के क्षेत्र में अग्रणी प्रमाणित करती है।

श्रीमद् भगवद् गीता भाष्य "यथार्थ गीता" धर्मशास्त्र है।

*World Religious Parliament is pleased to confer the above Title in recognition of his meritorious contribuiton for World Development through* ____________

26-1-2001

Chairman
Presentation Committee
or
Presiding Authority

Acharya Prabhakar Mishra
Chairman (Indian Region)
World Religious Parliament

Swami Shri Adgadanandji was felicitated by Vishwa Dharm Sansad on 26-01-2001, during the Mahakumbh festivities at Prayag as **'Vishvaguru'** (the Man of the World and prophet) for his work **'Yatharth Geeta'** (commentary on Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta). Besides, for serving the interests of the masses, he was honoured as vanguard of the society.

सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्र-शास्त्रार्थविद्यावतार-विश्वविश्रुत-महामहोपाध्यायदिविरुदविभूषक
पण्डितसम्राट-प्रातःस्मरणीय श्री शिवकुमारशास्त्रिमिश्रप्रतिष्ठापिता
वाराणसेयसर्वविधविद्वत्समाज-प्रतिनिधिभूता-

# श्री काशीविद्वत्परिषद्

पत्राचार कार्यालय :-
डी.१७/५८, दशाश्वमेध,
वाराणसी, उत्तर प्रदेश
मो. नं. ९४१५ २८५८५६
टे. नं. ०५४२-२४५२११३

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दिनांक 1.3.04

श्री काशीविद्वत्परिषद् समय-समय पर धर्म की समीक्षा करती आयी है। धर्म के सम्बन्ध में यह समाज को निर्देश देने का अधिकार रखती है। धार्मिक प्रकरणों में यह भारत की बहुमान्य सर्वोच्च संस्था है। किसी निर्णय को संशोधित करने का अधिकार परिषद् की कार्यकारिणी को है किन्तु धर्म और धर्मशास्त्र अपरिवर्तनशील होने से आदिकाल से धर्मशास्त्र श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ही रही है।

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत्।। गीता, ४/१

अर्जुन! इस अविनाशी योग को कल्प के आदि में मैंने सर्वप्रथम सूर्य के प्रति कहा। सूर्य ने अपने पुत्र मनु से कहा। मनु ने इस स्मृत ज्ञान को सुरक्षित रखने के लिए स्मृति की परम्परा चलायी और अपने पुत्र इक्ष्वाकु से कहा। कालान्तर में इस स्मृति ज्ञान को महर्षि वेदव्यास ने लिपिबद्ध किया। मानव जीवन का नियमन तथा निःश्रेयस प्रदान करने वाली आदि मनुस्मृति गीता ही है।

मनु के समक्ष अवतरित वेद इसी का विस्तार हैं। अन्य शास्त्र समयानुसार विश्व की विविध भाषाओं में ईश्वरीय गायन श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता की ही प्रतिध्वनि हैं। गीता की अवधारणा को स्वामी अड़गड़ानन्द जी ने 'यथार्थ गीता' में व्यक्त किया है जो शत-प्रतिशत सत्य है। परा विद्या की परिभाषा है।

स्वामी जी ने गीता की यह व्याख्या देकर विश्व मानव को एक धर्मशास्त्र, एक परमात्मा के पथ को प्रशस्त किया है। धर्मशास्त्र की व्याख्या के रूप में हम सभी 'यथार्थ गीता' की अनुशंसा करते हैं।

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|---|---|
| गणेशदत्त शास्त्री<br>मंत्री<br>श्री काशीविद्वत्परिषद्<br>भारत | आचार्य केदारनाथ त्रिपाठी दर्शनरत्नम वाचस्पति<br>अध्यक्ष<br>श्री काशीविद्वत्परिषद्<br>भारत |

India's Supreme Society of Religious Scholars **'Shri Kashi Vidvat Parishad'** has on 1st March 2004 accepted the **'Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta'** as the **'Dharm Shastra'** (Science of Religion) andn the **'Yatharth Geeta'** as the truth definer.

।।श्री काशीविश्वनाथो विजयते।।

सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्र-शास्त्रार्थविद्यावतार-विश्वविश्रुत-महामहोपाध्यायदिविरुदविभूषक
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वाराणसेयसर्वविधविद्वत्समाज-प्रतिनिधिभूता-

# श्री काशीविद्वत्परिषद्


पत्राचार कार्यालय :
डी.१७/५८, दशाश्वमेध,
वाराणसी, उत्तर प्रदेश
मो. नं. ९४१५ २८५८५६
टे. नं. ०५४२-२४५२११३


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दिनांक 1.3.04

श्री परमहंस आश्रम, शक्तेश गढचुनार की अपनी सौभाग्यपूर्ण यात्रा का सुअवसर प्राप्त हुआ है । वहाँ के वर्तमान परमहंस स्वामी श्री अड़गड़ानन्दजी महाराज के दर्शन का स्मरणीय अवसर काशी की विद्वन्मण्डली के साथ मुझे प्राप्त हुआ । श्री परमहंस स्वामी अड़गड़ानन्दजी महाराज बह्मलीन योगिराज स्वामी श्री परमानन्द परमहंस जी के शिष्य है और उनके द्वारा प्राप्त मानव धर्मोपदेश को स्वरचित 'यथार्थ गीता' के माध्यम से मानव मात्र के लिये प्रसारित कर रहे है, जिस गीता का ज्ञान भगवान कृष्ण ने अपने मुखारविन्द से अर्जुन के माध्यम से समस्त मानव के लिये किया था । इसीलिये श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता मानव मात्र का धर्मशास्त्र है । भगवान एक है और सबके है अतः उनकी गीता भी एक आकाश, एक सूर्य और एक चन्द्र के समान सबके लिये है ।

इस प्रकार गीता एकतामूलक है और स्वयं भी एकता का मूल है । भगवान ने स्वयं कहा है - ममैवांशो जीव लोकः'' अर्थात् प्राणी मात्र भगवान का ही अंश है तथा अंश अंशी में भेद नही होता है । अतः प्रत्येक प्राणी भगवद्भिन्नता के आधार पर वस्तुगत्या परस्पर में भी अभिन्न ही हैं। ''तद्भिन्नाभिन्नस्य तदभिन्नत्व नियमः'' यह वस्तुस्थिति है । अतःगीता एकतामूलक तथा एकता का मूल दोनो ही है । यही गीता की यथार्थता है जिसे पूज्य परमहंस जी महाराज ने ''यथार्थ गीता'' में, जो भाष्यरुप है, प्रतिपादित किया है ।

यहाँ ''यथार्थ गीता'' पद से यह भ्रम नहीं होना चाहिए कि कोई अयथार्थ गीता भी है क्योंकि गीता एक है - श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता'। प्रस्तुत 'यथार्थ गीता' श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता' का ही भाष्य है, जिसे स्वयं परमहंस श्री स्वामी जी महाराज ने प्रत्येक अध्याय की अंतिम पुष्पिका में कहा है ।- 'यथार्थ गीता' भाष्ये - ऐसा उल्लेख करते हुये । इसलिये 'यथार्थ गीता' का अभिप्रेतार्थ है । गीता की यथार्थता! इस अभिप्रेतार्थ को श्री स्वामी परमहंस जी ने इस सम्पूर्ण भाष्य में प्रतिपादित किया है ।

श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता पर अनेक भाष्य निर्मित हुए है - जैसे कर्म की प्रधानता बताते हुए लोकमान्य तिलक का गीता रहस्य, भगवद्भक्ति प्रधान वैष्णव भाष्य तथा ज्ञान प्रधान शांकरभाष्यादि ग्रन्थ! किन्तु प्रस्तुत यथार्थ गीता में एकेश्वरवाद मुख्यतया प्रतिंपादित है जिसका किसी से विरोध नहीं है, प्रत्युत्त सबके साथ एक ईश्वरत्व की अनुभूति के रुप में सामंजस्य प्रकाशक है । क्योंकि कर्मकलाप भी उसी में पर्यवसित, भक्ति भी उसी की, तथा उसी का साक्षात्कार परमपुरुषार्थ मोक्ष का साधक है । भगवान ने स्वयं कहा है-

''यत्करोषि यद्श्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय! तत्कुरुस्व मदर्पणम् ।।
''मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्व न संशयः ।।

तथा ''ज्ञात्वा मां शान्ति मृच्छति, ''ज्ञान लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधि गच्छति ''सर्व ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिस्यसि'' तथा सर्व कर्माखिलं पार्थ! ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते'' इत्यादि । इस प्रकार प्रस्तुत ''यथार्थ गीता'' की यथार्थता है - एक परमतत्व परमात्मा के आधार पर सबमें समत्व की अनुभूति -

''समो ऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न में द्वेष्यो ऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

इस पवित्र उद्देश के साथ श्री परमहंस स्वामी अडगडानन्दजी महाराज द्वारा संस्थापित एवं संचालित यह परमहंस आश्रम ऋषियों के प्राचीन गुफाओं एवं अरण्यो की तरह इस पर्वत श्रेणी के बीच से लोक में गीतोक्त इस उपदेश को उद्बुद्ध करने वाला है कि शास्त्रानुमोदित स्वाभाविक व्यवहार को अपनाते हुए सबमें ''अभेदभावनयैव यतितव्यम् भाव को लोक कल्याणार्थ प्रसारित करना है ।

हरि ॐ तत्सत्

आचार्य केदारनाथ त्रिपाठी दर्शनरत्नम वाचस्पति
अध्यक्ष
श्री काशीविद्वत्परिषद्
भारत

India's Supreme Society of Religious Scholars **'Shri Kashi Vidvat Parishad'** has on 1st March 2004 accepted the **'Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta'** as the **'Dharm Shastra'** (Science of Religion) andn the 'Yatharth Geeta' as the truth definer.

# GEETA IS A SACRED WRIT OF THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY

## Shri Maharshi Ved Vyas- Shri Krishn Era

Before the advent of Maharshi Ved Vyas, no text of any pedagogical discipline was available in the text form. Departing from this tradition of oral and perceiving words of wisdom and knowledge, he compiled the antecedent physical as well as spiritual knowledge in the textual form of four Vedas, Brahmasutra, Mahabharat, Bhagwad and Geeta and proclaimed that, "Gopal Krishn has condensed the conclusion of all the Upanishad in Geeta to enable the humanity to alleviate itself from pangs of sorrow.'' The Heart of all Vedas and the essence of all the Upanishad is Geeta, which was elicited by Krishn and provided sustenance to distraught humanity of reasoned doctrine and approach to perceive the Supreme Being. This has endowed the humanity of the ultimate means of Peace. The sage, from among all his works, earmarked Geeta as the treatise of knowledge and remarked that, the Geeta is suitable for being earnestly taken as the driving philosophy, of one's activities of the life. When we have the treatise given to us which was uttered by Krishn himself, why ever shall we need to store other scriptures ?

The essence of Geeta is explicitly clarified by the verse :

एकं शास्त्रं देवकीपुत्र गीतम्
एको देवो देवकीपुत्र एव।
एको मंत्रस्तस्य नामानि यानि
कर्माप्येकं तस्य देवस्य सेवा।।– (गीता-माहात्म्य)

Meaning there is only one holy writ which had been recited is by Lord Kirshn, the son of Devaki. There is only one spiritual entity worth emulating and the truth which has been specified in that commentary is - the soul. There is nothing immortal other than the soul. What chant has been advised by that sage in Geeta ? Om ! “Arjun, Om is the name of the eternal spiritual being. Chant Om and meditate upon me. There is only one Dharm-to serve the spiritual being described in Geeta. Place him in your heart with reverence. Therefore, Geeta has remained your own scripture.

Krishn is the messenger of the holy sages who have described the divine creator as the Universal truth over the thousands years of age. Many sages have said that, one may express their corporeal as well as eternal desires from the God, be awed by the God and not to believe in other deities- has already been proclaimed by many sages, but only the Geeta explicitly shows the way to atttain spirituality and fathom the distance on the way of attaining it - refer to “Yatharth Geeta”. Geeta not only gives spiritual peace, it also makes it easier to attain eternal and enduring alleviation. In order to perceive it please refer to the universally acclaimed commentary- “Yathartha Geeta’’.

Although Geeta is universally acclaimed, it has not been able to take place of doctrine or literature of any religion or sect, because religious sects are always cinched by one or the other dictum or ordain. The Geeta published in India is a legacy of the Universal Wisdom. The Geeta is the ethereal heritage of India, the spiritual country. As such, it should be treated as national literature-an effort may be directed at alleviating the humanity from the pathos of the tradition of class discrimination, conflicts and altercation and accord peace.

# UNIFORM DHARM PRINCIPLES

1. **EVERY ONE, CHILDREN OF GOD:**

   "The immortal soul in the body is a part of mine and it is HE who draws the five senses and the sixth the mind that dwell in nature."

   All human beings are children of God.

2. **PURPOSE OF THE HUMAN BODY :**

   'It hardly needs saying that since pious Brahmin and royal sages (rajarshi) attain to salvation, you should also renounce this miserable, ephemeral, mortal body and always engage in my worship."

   "Although devoid of money and comforts, yet rare to gain, while you are in the human body worship me. The right for such worship is granted to all those in a human body."

3. **ONLY TWO CASTES IN HUMAN BEINGS :**

   "There are in the world, O'Parth, two kinds of beings, the pious, on whom I have already dwelt at length, and the devilish of whom you will now hear from me.

   There are only two types of human beings, the'Deva' (divine) of whom the heart is dominated by the noble traits, and the'Asura' (devil) whose evil traits dominate the hearts. In this entire creation, there are no other types of human beings.

## 4. FULFILMENTS OF EVERY DESIRE THROUGH GOD :

"Men who do pious deeds enjoined by the three Vedas, who have tasted nectar and freed themselves from sin, and who wish for heavenly existence through worshipping me by Yagya, go to heaven (Indralok), and enjoy godly pleasures as a reward for their virtuous acts."

'Through worshipping me, people aspire to reach the heaven and I grant it to them'. Therefore, everything can be easily attained through the grace of Supreme Being.'

## 5. ELIMINATION OF EVERY SIN BY TAKING REFUGE IN THE SUPREME BEING :

"Even if you are the most heinous sinner, the ark of knowledge will carry you safely across all evils."

Even the worst of all sinners can undoubtedly gain access to the Supreme Being by using the boat of wisdom.

## 6. KNOWLEDGE :

"Constantly resting is the awareness that is called adhyatmya and perception of the Supreme spirit who is the end of realization of truth are all knowledge and whatever is contrary to them is ignorance.

Dedication to the wisdom of the supreme soul, and the direct perception of Eternal Wisdom, which is the manifestation of the Supreme Soul, constitute the components of the real wisdom. Any thing, other than these is ignorance. Thus direct perception of God is wisdom.

## 7. EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO WORSHIP :

"Even if a man of the most depraved conduct worships me incessantly, he is worthy of being regarded as a saint because he is a man of true resolve. Thus he shortly becomes pious and

achieves eternal peace, and so, 0 Son of Kunti, you should know beyond any doubt that my worshipper is never destroyed."

'A great sinner even, if worships ME with onepointedness and single mindeness shall be transformed into a noble soul and shall attain the everlasting peace within'. Therefore, a noble soul is the one who has dedicated himself to the Supreme Being.

**18. EVERLASTING SEED IN DIVINE PATH :**

"Since selfless action neither wears out the seed from which it sprang nor has any adverse consequence, even a partial observance of this dharm liberates (one) from the dire terror (of repeated birth and death)."

Even a small amount of action performed with a goal of self realization shall elevate the seeker from the terrible fear of birth and death cycles.

**19. THE ABODE OFTHE SUPREME BEING:**

"Propelling all living things that bestride a body which is but a contrivance by his maya, 0 Aijun, God abides in the hearts of all beings. Seek refuge with all your heart, 0 Bharat, in that God by whose grace you will attain to repose and the everlasting, ultimate bliss."

God resides within'the heart of every living being. Therefore, one must surrender himself totally to this Supreme Being with complete detachment. Through His compassion, one shall attain the ultimate bliss.

**10. YAGYA:**

"Yet other Yogis offer the functions of their senses and operations of their life breaths to the fire of Yog (self control) kindled by knowledge. As some offer their exhalation to inhalation, others offer their inhaled breath to the exhaled breath,

while yet others practise serenity of breath by regulating their incoming and outgoing breath."

The entire activities of the sense organs and mental turmoils are offered as oblations to the soul that is illuminated by wisdom, into the fire of yog. Meditators, on the self, sacrifice the vital air to apan and similarly apan to pran. Going even higher than this, a Yogi restrain all life forces and take refuge in the regulation of breath (pranayam). The procedure of such practices is Yagya. To perform this action is "ORDAINED ACTION" i.e. Karm.

## 11. PERFORMER OF YAGYA :

"O the best of Kuru, the yogis who have tasted the nectar flowing from Yagya attain to the eternal Supreme God, but how can the next life of men bereft of Yagya be happy, when even their life in this world is miserable?"

For the men, who do not possess the attitude of yagya, it is very difficult to obtain human form in the transmigratory existence. Therefore, everyone, in a human body is entitled to perform Worshipful Meditation (Yagya).

## 12. GOD CAN BE SEEN :

"O Arjun. mighty armed one, a worshipper can know this form of mine directly, acquire its essence, and even become one with it by a total and unswearing dedication."

It is easy to see Him face to face, know Him and even gain entry into Him through intense devotion.

"Only a seer, views the soul as a marvel, another one describes him as a marvel, and yet another hears him as a marvel, while there are some who hear him and yet know Him not.

An enlightened sage could see this SOUL as a rare wonder. This is direct perception.

**13. SOUL IS ETERNAL AND TRUE :**

"The self, which cannot be pierced or burnt or made wet or faded, is uninterrupted, all pervasive, constant, immovable and eternal"

Soul alone is true. Soul alone is eternal.

**14. CREATOR AND HIS CREATIONS ARE MORTAL :**

"All the worlds from Brahmlok downwards are, 0 Arjun, of a recurrent character, but, 0 son of Kunti, the soul which realizes me is not born again."

Brahma (the creator) and his creations, dev and demons are full of grief, momentary and mortal.

**15. WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS :**

Driven by the properties of their nature, they who fall from knowledge desire worldly pleasures and in imitation of the prevailing customs, worship other gods instead of one single God.

Those whose intellect has been robbed through enjoyment of worldly comforts, such foolish persons tend to worship other gods than the Supreme Being.

Although even covetous devotees indeed worship me in worshipping other gods, their worship is against the ordained provisions and therefore enveloped by ignorance.

Those who worship other gods, are worshipping Supreme Being under infuence of ignorance and their efforts go in vain.

Mark you that they who undergo terrible self mortification without spiritual sanction and are afflicted with hypocrisy and arrogance besides lust, attachment, and vanity of power and who wear out not only the elements that constitute their bodies but also me who dwells in their souls. are ignorant men with evil disposition.

Even people with virtuousness tend to worship other gods. However, you must know that such persons too are devilish in nature.

**16. THE IGNOBLE :**

Those who, after forsaking the prescribed way of performing Yagya, but adopt ways without scriptual sanction, are cruel, sinful and ignoble among the human being.

**17. ORDAINED PROCEDURES :**

"He who departs from the body intoning OM, which is GOD in word, and remembering me, attains to salvation."

The intoning of OM, which is the synonym for eternal Brahm, remembering only the sole Supreme Being and worshipful meditation is guidance of enlightened sage.

**18. SCRIPTURE :**

"I have thus instructed you, the sinless, in the most subtle of all knowledge because, Bharat, by knowing its essence a man gains wisdom and accomplishes all his tasks."

**GEETA IS SCRIPTURE-**

"So scripture is the authority on what ought and ought not to be done, and having learnt that you have the ability to act according to the provisions laid down by the scripture."

Scripture is only a base to take perfect decision in case of performance or avoidance of DUTY. Hence one should act as per prescribed task elaborated in GEETA.

**19. DHARM :-**

"Grieve not, for I shall free you from all sins if you abandon all other obligations (dharm) and seek refuge in me alone."

After giving up all the confusing ups and downs, and interpretations (he who shall take refuge in ME, means who shall completely surrender to the sole Supreme Being), the ordained

action to achieve ultimate bliss is the real conduct of DHARMA (2/40) and even if man of the most depraved conduct if performs, is worthy of being regarded as a Saint (9/30).

## 20. PLACE OF ATTAINMENT :

"For I am the one in whom the eternal GOD, immortal life, the imperishable Dharm, and the ultimate bliss all abide."

'He is the dwelling of immortal GOD, of everlasting life, of eternal DHARM and of the unblemished pure joy of attaining the Supreme goal'. In other words, a GOD-oriented saint, an enlightened GURU is this bliss, personified.

**(THE TRUE ESSENCE OF ALL THE RELIGIONS IN WORLD ARE ECHOS OF GEETA)**

## DIVINE MESSAGES PROCLAIMED BY THE HOLY SAINTS, SINCE PRIMEVAL TIMES TILL DATE, NOTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

*[ Swami Shri Adgadanandji has set up a plaque inscribed with these scriptures at the entrance of his residence, on the auspicious day of Ganga Dashehara (1993) at Shri Paramhans Ashram Jagatanand, Village & P. O. Bareini, Kachhava, Dist. Mirazpur (U.P.)]*

- **Shree Vedic Saints (Primeval Age- Narayan Sukta)**
  The Supreme Being prevailling in each speck is but the truth. The only way to attain Nirvana is to understand it.
- **Bhagwan Shree Ram (Treta: Millions of years ago-Ramayan)**
  Aspirant of benediction without praying to The Supreme Being is an ignoramus.
- **Yogeshwar Shree Krishn (5200 years ago - Geeta)**
  The God is the only truth. Achievement of the divinity is only possible through meditation. Praying to the idols of Deities is only done by the morons.
- **Saints Moosa (3000 years ago - Jewism)**
  As you revoked your trust from the God, made idols- He is unhappy. Begin praying to him.
- **Saint Jarathustra (2700 years ago - Zoroastrian Religion)**
  Meditate upon Ahurmazd to eradicate the evils inhibiting your heart, which are the root causes of all the sorrows.
- **Mahavir Swami (2600 years ago - Jain Scriptures)**
  Soul is the truth; By observance of austere penance it could be learnt in this birth itself.
- **Gautam Buddha (2500 years ago- Mahaparinirvvan Sutta)**
  I have attained that sublime ultimate stage, which was attained by the earlier saints. This is Nirvana.

- **Jesus Christ (2000 years ago- Christianity)**

  Divinity could only be achieved by prayers. Come to me. Then only you would be called the son of the God.

- **Hajrat Mohammed Saheb (1400 years ago - Islam)**

  ***"La Ill- Allah Muhammad-ur Rasul- Allah"-*** There is none worthy of prayers other than the all- pervading God. Mohammed et al are holy saints.

- **Aadi Shankaracharya (1200 years ago)**

  The wordly life is futile. The only true being is the name of the Creator.

- **Saint Kabir (600 years ago)**

  The name of Ram is ultimate, all else is futile. The beginning, middle and the end is nothing but the chant of Ram. Chant the name of Ram, which only is subliminal.

- **Guru Nanak (500 years ago)**

  "Ek Omkar Satguru Prasadi''. Only an Omkar is true being, but it is a favour of the holy teacher.

- **Swami Dayanand Saraswati (200 years ago)**

  Pray only tp the everlasting, immortal one God. The cardinal name of this Almighty is Om

- **Swami Shri Paramanandji (1912 - 1969 A. D.)**

  When the Almighty bestows benevolence, the enemies turn friends and adversities become Fortunateness. The God is omnipresent.

# A HUMBLE APPEAL

Since quite a good number of Sanskrit words had to be included in the English rendering of Yathartha Geeta it is useful to explain briefly why and how they have been used:

(I) To take some more prominent examples, words such as dharm, yog, yagya, sanskar, varn, sattwa, rajas, tamas, varnsankar, karm, kshetra, kshetragya, and pranayam, which occur through the whole book, are really untranslatable into English. Dharm, for instance, is not “religion;” and karm is something more then “action.” Despite this, however, approximate English equivalents have been used wherever possible, but only, of course, if they do not distort or misrepresent the original meaning. So “action,” “property,” and “sphere” have been used for karm, varn, and kshetr respectively. Approximate English equivalents have also been used for sattwa, rajas, and tamas, taking care that they do not obstruct the flow or rhythm of language. But it was not found possible to have English substitutes for dharm, yog, yagya, sanskar, and varnsankar, and these words as well as many others have been used as they are. But since the meaning of all Sanskrit words used in the rendering (whether with or without English equivalents) is fully clarified in either footnotes or the text itself, readers who have no familiarity with Sanskrit or Hindi will find no difficulty in comprehending them. The main object in this translation has been to use the unavoidable Sanskrit words or their English substitutes in

such a way that they do not look like patchwork and obstruct reading in any way.

(II) As for the English transcription of these Sanskrit words, normal English alphabet has been used. Phonetic script and diacritical marks have been strictly dispensed with because they discourage readers and keep them away from Indological books. So (संस्कार) has been transcribed as sanskar (that is how the word is spoken) rather than as sanskara; and (यज्ञ) as yagya (that is how it is pronounced) rather than as yajna. The same principle of transcribing Sanskrit words in normal English alphabet with a close proximity to the way these words are actually spoken has been followed throughout the book. I believe that this way makes for easier, smoother reading.

(III) Without meaning any offence to other scholarly writers, in deference to the same principle of transcribing Sanskrit words in the normal English alphabet with a close proximity to their actual pronunciation I have also dispensed with the practice of adding an “a” to the last pure consonants of English transcripts of Sanskrit words. So I have transcribed (कृष्ण) as Krishn instead of Krishna, (अर्जुन) as Arjun instead of Arjuna, (महाभारत) as Mahabharat instead of Mahabharata, (योग) as yog instead of yoga, (धर्म) as dharm instead of dharma, (कर्म) as karm instead of karma, and so on. The argument that the sound of the ultimate pure consonant is incomplete unless an “a” is added to it is untenable, for had this been the case, the entire system of spelling in English would have to be changed. If the last “m” in “farm” is a

complete consonant sound, why should dharm be transcribed as dharma? Keeping this in view, one cannot but conclude that people who have acted upon the illogical premise have done a singular disservice to Sanskrit (their own language) by introducing a system of transcription that has led to the distortion of the pronunciation of such a large number of commonly used words. So, whatever be the assumption behind the practice of adding an “a” to the ultimate pure consonant of Sanskrit/Indian words in their English transcription, in actual practice this “appendix” is treated as a full vowel with the sound of “a” as in “father” or “rather” or “bath” rather than as a part of the consonant itself.

(IV) Just because Sanskrit or Hindi words are transcribed in English alphabet they do not become English. So application of the usual English practice of using an “s” to make plurals to these words is improper. The plural of karm is karm, not karms. The plural of ved is ved, not veds. So “s” has not been used to make plurals of Sanskrit nouns in this translation.

*One of Swamiji’s disciples*

## Contents

# PREFACE

It appears that there is no need of any further exposition of the Geeta. Hundreds of commentaries, out of which more than fifty are in Sanskrit, have been attempted so far. But, although there are scores of interpretations, they have a common basis- the Geeta, which is only one. Why, then one may wonder, are there all these divergent opinions and controversies when Yogeshwar Krishn's message must of necessity have been only one? The proclaimer verily speaks of truth that is only one, but if there are ten listeners they construe his meaning in ten different ways. Our grasp of what has been said is determined by the extent to which we are under the domination of one of the three properties of nature, namely, sattwa (moral virtue and goodness), rajas (passion and moral blindness), and tamas (ignorance and darkness). We cannot comprehend beyond the limitations imposed by these properties. So it is logical that there should be all these disputes about the import of the Geeta-"The Lord's Song."

Men fall prey to doubts, not only because many different views are held on a given subject, but also because of the fact that the same principle is often enunciated in different ways and styles at different times. Quite a good many existing commentaries on the Geeta are touched by the current of truth, and yet if one of them-even a just and correct interpretation-is placed among a thousand other interpretations it is almost impossible to recognize it for what it is. Identification of truth is an onerous task, for even falsehood wears the "brows" of truth. The many expositions of the Geeta all profess that they represent truth even though they may not have any inkling of it. As against this, even when

quite a good many interpreters did succeed in coming by this truth, for a number of reasons they were prevented from giving a public utterance to it.

The much too common inability to get at the meaning of the Geeta in its true perspective may be attributed to the fact that Krishn was a yogi, an enlightened sage. Only another great and accomplished Soul-man of knowledge and discernment-who has gradually attained to the ultimate spiritual goal discoursed upon by Krishn can realize and reveal the real intent of the Yogeshwar when he preached to his friend and disciple Arjun. What is within one's mind cannot be fully expressed by mere words. While some of it is communicated by facial expression and gestures, and even by what is named "eloquent" silence, the rest that is still unexpressed is something dynamic and seekers can know it only through action and by actually aversing the path of quest. So only another sage who has himself trodden the path and arrived at Krishn's sublime state may know what the message of the Geeta really is. Rather than just reproducing lines from the scripture, he can know and demonstrate its intent and significance, for Krishn's insights and preceptions are also his insights and perceptions. Since he is a seer himself, he cannot only show the essence but also awaken it in others, and even prompt and enable them to embark on the way that leads to it.

My noble teacher-preceptor, the most revered paramhans Parmanand Ji Maharaj, was a sage of such achievement; and Yatharth Geeta is nothing but a compilation of the meaning that was derived by the author from his teacher's utterances and inner promptings. Nothing that you will find in this exposition belongs to me. And this meaning, as the reader is about to see, embodies a dynamic, action-oriented principle that has to be undertaken and personally gone through by everyone who has taken to the path of spiritual seeking and accomplishment. So long as he is removed from it, he has evidently not set upon the way of

worship and meditation but is yet roaming about amidst the maze of certain lifeless stereotypes. So we have to take refuge in a sage-a Soul of the highest attainment, for this is what Krishn has commended. He explicitly admits that the truth he is about to illumine has also been known to and celebrated by other sages. Not once does he profess that only he is aware of this truth or that only he can reveal it. On the contrary he exhorts worshippers to seek haven under a seer and imbibe knowledge from him by an innocent, guileless ministering to his needs. So Krishn has but proclaimed the verities that have also been discovered and witnessed to by other sages of true accomplishment.

The, Sanskrit in which the Geeta is bodied forth is so simple and lucid. If we but make a patient and careful perusal of its syntax and the etymology of its words, we can understand most of the Geeta by ourselves. But the difficulty is that we are disinclined to accept what these words really signify. To cite an instance, Krishn has declared in unambiguous terms that true action is the undertaking of yagya. But we yet persist in asserting that all the worldly business in which men are engaged is action. Throwing light upon the nature of yagya, Krishn says that while many yogi undertake it by offering pran (inhaled breath) to apan (exhaled breath), and many sacrifice apan to pran, yet many others regulate both pran and apan to achieve perfect serenity of breath (pranayam). Many sages resign the inclination of their senses to the sacred fire of self-restraint. Thus yagya is said to be contemplation of breath of pran and apan. This is what the composer of the Geeta has recorded. Despite this, however, we adamantly hold that intoning swaha and casting of barley grains, oil seeds, and butter into the altar-fire is yagya. Nothing like this has been even suggested by Yogeshwar Krishn.

How to account for this all too common failure io comprehend the true meaning of the Geeta? Even after a great deal of hair-splitting and cramming, all that we succeed in getting hold of, is nothing more than the

external framework of its syntactical order. Why perforce, we should find out, do we find ourselves deprived of truth ? As a matter or fact, with his birth and growing up a man inherits the paternal legacy of home, shop, land and property, rank and honour, cattle and other livestock, and now-a-days even machinery and appliances. Pretcisely in the same way he also inherits certain customs, traditions, and modes of worship: the evil legacy of all the three hundred and thirty million Hindu gods and goddesses who were identified and catalogued long ago as well as of the innumerable various forms of them all over the world. As a child grows up, he observes his parents', his brothers' and sisters', and, his neighbours' way of worship. His family's beliefs, rites, and ceremonies are thus permanently imprinted on his mind. If his heritage is worship of a goddess, all his life he recites only the name of that goddess. If his patrimony is worship of ghosts and spirits, he cannot but endlessly repeat the names of those ghosts and spirits. So it is that while some of us adhere to Shiv, some others cleave to Krishn, and yet others cling to this or that deity. It is beyond us to forsake them.

If such misguided men ever get a propitious, sacred work like the Geeta, they fail to grasp its real import. It is· possible for a man to give up the material possessions he has inherited, but he cannot rid himself of inherited traditions and creeds. He can relinquish material belongings that are his legacy and go far away from them, but even there he is doggedly pursued by the thoughts, beliefs, and usages that have been ineradicably engraved on his mind and heart. He cannot after all cut off his head. It is for this reason that we also construe the truth contained in the Geeta in the light of our inherited assumptions, customs, and modes of worship. If the scripture is in harmony with them and there is no contradiction between the two, we concede it veracity. But we either reject it or twist it to suit our convenience if this is not the case. Is it surprising then that more often than not we miserably fail to comprehend

the mysterious knowledge of the Geeta ? So this secret continues to remain inscrutable. Sages and noble teacher-preceptors, who have known the Self as well as his kinship with the Supreme Spirit, are on the other hand knowers of the truth that the Geeta embodies. Only they are qualified to say what the Geeta proclaims. For others, however, it remains a secret which they can best resolve by sitting devotedly as earnest disciples near some sage of awareness. This way of realization has been repeatedly emphasized by Krishn.

The Geeta is not a holy book that belongs to any one individual, caste, group, school, sect, nation or time. It is rather a scripture for the entire world and for all times. If is for all, for every nation, every race, and for every man and woman, whatever be their spiritual level and capacity. Irrespective of this, however, just hearsay or someone's influence should not be the basis for a decision that has a direct bearing upon one's existence. Krishn says in the last chapter of the Geeta that even just hearing its mysterious knowledge is indeed salutary. But after a seeker has thus learnt it from an accomplished teacher, he also needs to practise it and incorporate it into his own conduct and experience. This necessitates that we approach the Geeta after freeing ourselves from all prejudices and preconceived notions. And then we will indeed find it a pillar of light.

To regard the Geeta as just a sacred book is not enough. A book is at best a sign-post that guides readers to knowledge. It is said that one who has known the truth of the Geeta is a knower of the Ved-which literally means knowledge of God. In the Upanishad Brihadaranyak, Yagnvalkya calls the Ved "the breath of the Eternal." But all the knowledge and all the wisdom that the Geeta embodies, we must always remember, comes to consciousness only within the worshipper's heart.

The great sage Vishwamitr, we are told, was absorbed in meditative penance. Pleased with this, Brahma appeared and-said to

him, “From this day you are a sage (rishi).” But not satisfied with this, the hermit went on with his intent contemplation. After a while Brahma, now accompanied by other gods, returned and said,

“From today you are a royal sage (rajarshi).” But since Vishwamitr’s wish was yet unfulfilled, he continued with his incessant penance. Attended upon by gods, virtuous impulses that constitute the treasure of divinity, Brahma came back again and told Vishwamitr that from that day he was a supreme sage (maharshi). Vishwamitr then said to the oldest of all gods, “No, I wish to be called a brahmarshi (Brahmin sage) who has conquered his senses.” Brahma protested that it could not be because he had not yet subdued his senses. So Vishwamitr resumed his penance, so rigorously this time that the smoke of the fire of penance began to rise from his head. Gods then entreated Brahma and the Lord of creation once more appeared before Vishwamitr and said, “Now you are a brahmarshi.” Thereupon Vishwamitr rejoined, “If I am a brahmarshi, let the Ved wed me.” His prayer was granted and the Ved was awakened in his heart. The unknown essence-all the mysterious knowledge and wisdom of the Ved-now became known. This direct apprehension of truth rather than a book is Ved. So wherever Vishwamitr-an enlightened sage-is, the Ved abide there.

Krishn has also revealed in the Geeta that the world is like an indestructible Peepal tree whose root above is God and whose branches spreading below are nature. The one who cuts this tree down with the axe of renunciation and knows God is a knower of the Ved. So the perception of God that comes after the cessation of nature’s dominance is named “Ved.” Since this vision is a gift from God himself, it is said to transcend even the Self. A sage is also one who has gone beyond the Self by merging into the Supreme Spirit, and it is God who then speaks through him. He turns into the medium by which the signs coming from God are transmitted. So a mere understanding of the literal meaning of

words and grammatical structures is not sufficient to comprehend the truth underlying a sage's utterances. Only the seeker who has achieved the state of a non-person by actually treading the action-oriented path of spiritual fulfillment, and whose ego is dissolved in God, can comprehend this hidden meaning.

Although essentially impersonal, the Ved are compilations of the utterances of a hundred or a hundred and fifty sage-seers. But when the same utterances are put down in writing by others, a code of social order and organization is also included along with them. Since this code is believed to have come down from men of true accomplishment and wisdom, people tend to adhere to its provisions even though they may have nothing to do with dharm-fulfillment of one's innate spiritual obligation. In our own time we see how even hangers-on of no consequence get their work done by pretending to be intimate with weilders of power, whereas as a matter of fact they may not be really even known to them. Likewise, codifiers of rules for social life and conduct also hide behind great sages and exploit their venerable names to win subsistence. The same has happened with the Ved. Fortunately, however, what may be deemed the essence of the Ved-the divine revelations of saints and seers who lived thousands of years ago-is enshrined in the Upanishad. Neither dogma nor theology, these meditations concern direct, overwhelming religious experience in the midst of life, and record insights into eternal truths. They are unified by their common search for the true nature of reality, and in the course of this search provide glimpses into sublime states of the soul. And the Geeta is an abstract of this essence that the Upanishad contain. Or, as it might be said, the Geeta is the quintessence of the immortal substance that the Upanishad have churned from the celestial poetry of the Ved.

Every sage who has attained to reality is also likewise an embodiment of this quintessence. And in every part of the world a

compilation of his utterances is known as scripture. Nevertheless, dogmatists and blind followers of creeds insist that this or that holy book alone is a repository of truth. So we have people who say that only the Koran is a revelation of truth and that its visionary experience cannot be had again. There are others who hold forth that no man can go to heaven without placing his faith in Jesus Christ, the one Son of God. We often hear people say, “There cannot be such a sage or seer or prophet again.” But all this is nothing but blind, irrational orthodoxy. The essence perceived by all true sages is the same.

Its universality makes the Geeta unique among the eminent sacred works of the entire world. That also makes it a yardstick by which the veracity of other holy books can be tested and judged. So the Geeta is that touchstone that vindicates the substance of truth in other scriptures and also resolves disputes arising from their sometimes incompatible or even contradictory assertions. As it has been pointed cut, almost all holy books abound in provisions for worldly life and sustenance, and also in directives for religious rites and ceremonies. There are also introduced into them-in order to make them more attractive-sensational and even dreadful accounts of what ought or ought not to be done. It is so unfortunate that people blindly accept all these superficial matters as the “essence” of dharm, forgetting that regulations and modes of worship that have been laid down for the conduct and sustenance of physical life are bound to undergo change with place, time, and situation. This really is behind all our communal and religious disharmony. The uniqueness of the Geeta is that it rises above temporal questions and reveals the dynamic way by which man may achieve perfection of the Self and final absolution. There is not a single verse in the whole composition that is concerned with sustenance of physical life. On the contrary, each verse of the Geeta demands of its disciples that they equip themselves and get ready for the inner war-the discipline of

worship and meditation. Instead of embroiling us, like other sacred books, in the irreconcilable contradictions of heaven and hell, it is concerned exclusively with demonstrating the way by which the Soul may attain to the immortal state after which there are no shackles of birth and death.

Every sage-teacher-like a writer-has his own style and certain favourite expressions. Besides choosing a poetic medium, Yogeshwar Krishn has also repeatedly employed and stressed terms such as action (karm), yagya, varn, varnsankar, war, sphere (kshetr), and knowledge or discrimination (gyan) in the Geeta. These words are invested with unique meanings in the context and are certainly not divested of charm by frequent repetition. In both the original Hindi version and its English rendering, the peculiar meanings of these expressions have been strictly adhered to and there are explanations wherever required. These words and their unique meanings which have been almost completely lost today constitute the main attraction of the Geeta. Since readers will meet them again and again in Yatharth Geeta, brief definitions of these terms are given below:

**KRISHN?** ... He was a Yogeshwar, an adept in yog, an accomplished teacher

**TRUTH?** ... The Self or Soul alone is true.

**SANATAN?** ... The word means “eternal.” The Soul is eternal; God is eternal.

**SANATAN DHARM?** ... It is the conduct that unites with God.

**WAR?** ... “War” is the conflict between the riches of divinity and the devilish hoard that represent the two distinct, contradictory impulses of the mind and heart. Its final consequence is the annihilation of both.

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| **KSHETR?** | ... | The word means "sphere." The sphere where the above war is fought is the human body, a composite of the mind along with senses. |
| **GYAN?** | ... | The word means "knowledge/discernment." Direct perception of God is knowledge. |
| **YOG?** | ... | Attainment to the Supreme Spirit who is beyond worldly attachment and repulsion is yog. |
| **GYAN YOG?** | ... | The Way of Knowledge or Discrimination. Worship and meditation are action. Embarking on this action with reliance upon one's own prowess and ability is the Way of knowledge. |
| **NISHKAM KARM YOG?** | ... | The Way of Selfless Action. Setting upon action with dependence on an accomplished teacher and total self-surrender is the Way of Selfless Action. |
| **THE TRUTH REVEALED** | ... | Krishn has revealed the same truth which seer-sages had perceived before him and which they will perceive hereafter. |
| **YAGYA?** | ... | Yagya is the name of a certain process of worship and meditation. |
| **KARM?** | ... | The word means "action. "Undertaking of yagya is action. |
| **VARN?** | ... | The four stages into which action-the ordained mode of worship-has been divided are the four varn; rather than |

being caste-names they represent the lower and higher states of the same worshipper.

**VARNSANKAR?** ... The advent of confusion into the worshipper and his consequent straying from the path of God-realization is varnsankar.

**HUMAN CATEGORIES?** ... Governed by natural properties, there are two categories of men, the godly and the ungodly-the righteous and the unrighteous; driven by their inborn inclinations they ascend or descend.

**GODS?** ... Gods represent the collective body of virtuous impulses that abide in the realm of heart and enable the Soul to attain to the sublimity of the supreme God.

**AVATAR?** ... The word means “incarnation.” This incarnation is always brought about within man’s heart, never outside.

**VIRAT DARSHAN?** ... The phrase may be translated as “vision of the Omnipresent.” It is a God-gifted intuition in a sage’s heart, perceptible only when the Supreme Being stands as a vision within the worshipper.

**THE REVERED GOD?** ... The supreme goal. The one transcendental God alone is fit for worship. The place where he should be sought for is the realm of heart: and he can be realized. only through the medium of sages (Accomplished

teachers) who have attained to that unmanifest state.

Now, out of these, in order to understand Krishn's form one has to study upto Chapter 3 and by Chapter 13 it will be evident that Krishn was an accomplished sage (yogi). The reality disclosed by the Geeta will be known from Chapter 2 itself, which demonstrates how "eternal" and "truth" are substitutes; but these concepts are also dealt with throughout the poem. The nature of "war" will be clear by Chapter 4 and whatever doubts there are in regard to this subject are all fully resolved by Chapter 11. However, more light is thrown on it upto Chapter 16. One should turn again and again to Chapter 13 for its elaborate account of the sphere-the battlefield-where the "war" is fought.

It will be clearly understood from Chapter 4 and then from Chapter 13 that perception is given the name of knowledge (gyan). The significance of yog is distinctly seen by Chapter 6, although delineation of the several aspects of the question again runs through the whole composition. The Way of Knowledge will be clearly known from Chapters 3 to 6 and there is hardly any need of going to any later chapters for it. Introduced in Chapter 2, the Way of Selfless Action is explained and dwelt upon right till the end. The meaning of yagya will be quite distinct from a reading of Chapters 3 and 4.

Action (karm) is first mentioned in the thirty-ninth verse of Chapter 2. Beginning with this, if we read upto Chapter 4, we will clearly understand why "action" is worship and meditation. Chapters 16 and 17 argue convincingly that this is truth. Whereas the problem of varnsankar is dealt with in Chapter 3, incarnation (avatar) is illumined in Chapter 4. Although the fourfold varn classification is hinted at in Chapters 3 and 4, for a more elaborate treatment of the subject we have to look carefully at Chapter 18. Chapter 16 accounts for the division of men into the two

categories of the godly and the demoniacal. Chapters 10 and 11 reveal the omnipresent, cosmic form of God, but the subject is also taken up in Chapters 7, 9, and 15. That the other gods and goddesses are only hollow myths is established in Chapters 7, 9, and 17. Chapters 3,4, 6, and 18 show beyond any doubt that, rather than any external place like a temple with its idols, the proper seat for worship of God is the realm of the devotes's heart within which the exercise of contemplation of the incoming and outgoing breath is taken up in seclusion. In case a reader is hard-pressed for time, he will grasp the core of the Geeta by studying only the first six Chapters.

As it has already been said, instead of providing skills needed for the sustenance of worldly, mortal life, the Geeta instructs its votaries in the art and discipline that will surely bring them victory in the battle of life. But the war the Geeta portrays is not the physical, worldly war that is fought with deadly weapons, and in which no conquest is ever of a permanent character. The war of the Geeta is the clash of innate properties and inclinations, the symbolic representation of which as “war” has been a time-honoured literary tradition. What the Geeta portrays as a war between Dharmkshetr and Kurukshetr, between the riches of piety and the accumulation of impiety, between righteousness and unrighteousness, is no different from the Vedic battles between Indr and Vrit-between awareness and ignorance, or the Puranic struggles between gods and demons, or the battles between Ram and Ravan and between the Kaurav and the Pandav in the great Indian epics Ramayan and Mahabharat.

Where is the battleground on which this “war” is fought? The Dharmkshetr and Kurukshetr of the Geeta are no geographical locations.

As the poet of the Geeta has made Krishn reveal to Arjun, the physical, human body itself is the sphere-the patch of earth-on which the sown seeds of good and evil sprout as sanskar. The ten organs of

sense, mind, intellect, sensibility, ego, the five primary substances, and the three nature-born properties are said to be constituents of the whole extension of this sphere. Helplessly driven by the three properties-sattwa, rajas, and tamas-man is compelled to act. He cannot survive for even a moment without undertaking action. Kurukshetr is the sphere where, since times immemorial, we have been undergoing repeated birth, repeated death, and repeated conception in the mother's womb. When, through the agency of a noble teacher-preceptor, the seeker embarks on the true way of worship and meditation and begins gradually to make his way towards the Supreme Being-embodiment of the most sublime dharm, Kurukrhetr (sphere of action) is transformed into Dharmkshetr (sphere of righteousness).

Within this human body, in its mind and heart-the innermost seats of thought and feeling-there have always dwelt the two distinct, primordial tendencies-the divine and the devilish. Pandu, the image of virtue, and Kunti, the type of dutiful conduct, are parts of the treasure of divinity. Before the awakening of righteousness in a man's heart, with his deficient understanding he regards whatever he does as an obligation. But, in truth, he is incapable of doing what is worthwhile because there cannot be an awareness of proper duty without the advent of moral virtue and goodness. Karn, who spends all his life fighting the Pandav, is the only acquisition of Kunti before she is wedded to Pandu. And the most formidable enemy of her other sons-the Pandav-is this Karn. Karn is thus the type of action that is hostile to the essentially divine character of the Self. He stands for traditions and usages which bind and hinder men from getting rid of false, misguided rites and ceremonies. With the awakening of virtue, however, there is the gradual emergence of Yudhisthir, the embodiment of dharm; Arjun, the image of affectionate devotion; Bheem, the type of profound sentiment; Nakul, the symbol of regulated life; Sahdev, the adherer to truth; Satyaki, the repository of

goodness; the King of Kashi, an emblem of the sanctity that abides within man; and Kuntibhoj, the symbol of world-conquest through earnest undertaking of duty. The total number of the Pandav is seven akshauhini. “Aksh” is another word for vision. That which is made up of love and awareness of truth is the treasure of divinity. In fact, the seven akshauhini, which is given as the total strength of the Pandav army, is no physical reckoning; the number verily represents the seven steps-the seven stages of yog-that the seeker has to traverse in order to reach the most sublime God, his supreme goal.

Opposed to the Pandav army, embodiments of pious impulses that are beyond counting, is the army of Kurukshetr-of the Kaurav-with a strength of eleven akshauhini. Eleven is the number of the ten sense organs and the one mind. That which is constituted of the mind along with the ten senses is the devilish hoard, a part of which is Dhritrashtr, who persists in ignorance in spite of his awareness of truth. Gandhari, his consort, is the type of sense-bound disposition. Along with them there are also Duryodhan, the symbol of excessive infatuation; the evil-minded Dushashan; Karn, the perpetrator of alien deeds; the deluded Bheeshm; Dronacharya of dual conduct; Ashwatthama, the image of attachment; the skeptical Vikarn; Kripacharya, the type of compassionate conduct in a state of incomplete worship; and Vidur, who stands for the Self that dwells in ignorance but whose eyes are always aimed at the Pandav. Vidur is the nature-bound Self that yet strives to make his way towards virtue and spiritual enlightenment, because he is after all an immaculate part of the Supreme Spirit. Thus the number of unrighteous impulses, too, is infinite.

As we have thus seen, the sphere-the battlefield-is only one, the physical body, but the impulses that wage constant war against each other on it are two. While one of them tempts man to regard nature as real and thus effects his degradation to birth in lower forms, the other

convinces him of the reality and all-pervading domination of the Supreme Being and so provides access to him. When the seeker takes refuge in a sage who has perceived the essence, there is a gradual but steady ascent of virtuous impulses on the one hand while, on the other, there is a decline and then the final destruction of evil impulses. When there remains no malady and the mind is perfectly restrained, even the restrained mind at last ceases to be and there is no longer any need of even the treasure of divinity. Arjun has the vision that following after the Kaurav army, even the Pandav warriors are hurling themselves into the fiery mouth of the Omnipresent and getting annihilated. Even pious impulses are thus dissolved with final attainment and the ultimate consequence then issues forth. If the accomplished sage undertakes any enterprise after this final dissolution, it is only for the guidance and edification of his less fortunate fellowmen and disciples.

Aiming at amelioration of the world, sages have devised concrete, tangible metaphors to represent subtle abstractions. So it is that characters of the Geeta are all symbolic-mere metaphors-for formless, unmanifest inclinations and abilities. Some thirty to forty characters are named in the first chapter, one-half of whom epitomize forces of piety whereas the others stand for forces of impiety. The first half are Pandav, while the others belong to the Kaurav camp. About half a dozen of these characters are again alluded to on the occasion of Arjun’s vision of the all-pervading God. Apart from these two chapters, there is no other mention of these characters anywhere else in the Geeta. Out of them Arjun alone is present before Yogeshwar Krishn from the beginning to the end. And this Arjun too is, as we are about to see, nothing more than a type. Rather than a three- dimensional individual, he is the type of affectionate devotion.

At the outset Arjun is deeply agitated at the fancied prospect of loss of what he mistakenly assumes to be the timeless and eternal

dharm of his family. But the Yogeshwar points out to him that grief and irresolution are an offshoot of ignorance, for the Soul alone is eternal and indestructible. The body is perishable and Arjun is exhorted to fight because it is so. But it is not clear from Krishn's exhortation whether Arjun has to slay the Kaurav alone. If he has to destroy bodies, are the Pandav also not physical beings? Is it not that Arjun's kinsmen are on both sides? Is it possible to kill the sanskar-based body with a sword? Even more intriguingly, if the body is perishable and without real existence, who is this Arjun? And who is Krishn standing by to defend and protect? Is he with Arjun to save and preserve a body? Doesn't he proclaim that one who toils for the body is a sinful, deluded man who lives in vain? So if Krishn is standing up for the sake of a mere body, isn't he himself a sinful, deluded being with a futile life? But, as we have seen, Arjun of the Geeta is no more than a symbol-the embodiment of loving devotion.

The accomplished teacher is ever in readiness to help his disciple. Arjun and Krishn are respectively the loving, dedicated pupil and the concerned, caring mentor. Since he is confused about the meaning of dharm, he most humbly entreats Krishn to enlighten him on that which brings the most propitious felicity to the Self. Arjun's yearning is for final beatitude rather than for any material reward. So he begs Krishn not only to instruct but also support and secure him, for he is a pupil who has found shelter under a loving teacher. This theme of an earnest and devoted pupil learning from an enlightened and caring teacher-preceptor runs through the whole of the Geeta.

Moved by sentiment, if someone insisted on staying with my most revered and noble mentor Parmanand Ji, he would say, "Go and live anywhere you like with your body, but in your mind be with me. Every morning and evening recite some one or two-lettered name like Ram, Shiv, or OM, and contemplate my form in your heart. If you can

securely hold on to this form, I shall give you the one whose name you recite. When your hold gets yet stronger, I shall always abide in your heart like a charioteer." When our Self has become one with the form of the accomplished teacher, he dwells as intimately with us as our own limbs. He begins to guide even before the emergence of virtuous inclinations within the mind. And when he abides in the devotee's heart, he is ever awake and inseparably with this disciple's Self.

After viewing Yogeshwar Krishn's manifold glories in Chapter 11, Arjun cringes with fear and begins to apologize for his petty improprieties. As an affectionate friend and considerate teacher, Krishn readily forgives him and re-assumes his placid, benign form. He then tells Arjun that neither has anyone seen this manifestation of his in the past nor can anyone see it in the future. If it is so, vision of the Supreme Spirit was meant for Arjun alone, and the Geeta then is apparently of no use for us. But doesn't Sanjay have the same vision along with Arjun? And hasn't Krishn given the assurance earlier that, enlightened and redeemed by the yagya of knowledge, many sages have been blessed with a direct perception of him? What after all does Yogeshwar Krishn intend to communicate? Arjun is a personification of affection and dedication, and these are feelings shared by all mankind. No man devoid of these sentiments has seen the coveted God before and no man devoid of these sentiments can see him in the future. In Goswami Tulsidas's words, Ram cannot be realized without loving faith despite endless recitation, yog, and relinquishment. So Arjun is a symbolic figure. And if it is not so, it would be wiser of us to keep the Geeta aside, for in that case Arjun alone was entitled to perception of God.

At the end of the same chapter (i.e., 11), Krishn assures his friend and devotee, "O Arjun, scorcher of enemies, a worshipper can know this form of mine directly, acquire its essence, and even become one with it by total and unswerving devotion." "Intent devotion" is only

another expression for “tender affection.” And that is the distinguishing mark of Arjun. He is also a symbol of seeking. An avatar, too, is symbolical and so are also all the other characters of the Geeta so that we may be enabled to see in the great war of Kurukshetr “the battle-field of the Soul.”

Irrespective of whether there were actual historical personages such as Arjun and Krishn, and of whether there was an actual war called the Mahabharat, the Geeta is by no means a portrayal of physical warfare. Standing on the brink of that historical war, it was not his army but Arjun who was unnerved. The army was fully in readiness to fight. Doesn’t it imply, then, that by preaching to Arjun, Krishn had only conferred on his beloved friend and disciple the ability to be worthy of his army? In fact, the whole of the means for spiritual accomplishment cannot be put down in black and white. Even after one has gone through the Geeta several times, there is yet the necessity of actually traversing the path of God-realization that the Lord has charted. This is the necessity- which Yatharth Geeta is all about.

- **Swami Adgadanand**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 1

## The Yog of Irresolution and Grief

**धृतराष्ट्र उवाच**

**धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः।**

**मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय।।१।।**

[ Dhritrashtr said, “Assembled at Kurukshetr* *[*The field or sphere of dharm. Dharm is not only moral virtues and good works, but the essential character that enables a thing or being to be its own Self.]*, at Dharmkshetr, and eager for combat, O Sanjay, what did my and Pandu’s sons do?” ]

Dhritrashtr is the very image of ignorance; and Sanjay is the embodiment of self-restraint. Ignorance lurks at the core of the objective, the outward-looking, mind. With his mind enveloped in darkness, Dhritrashtr is blind since birth, but he sees and hears through Sanjay, the epitome of self-control. He knows that God alone is real, but as long as his infatuation for Duryodhan born from ignorance lasts, his inner eye will be focused on the Kaurav, who symbolize the ungodly forces of negative, sinful impulses.

The human body is a field for combat. When there is abundance of divinity in the realm of the heart, the body is transmuted into a Dharmkshetr (field of dharm), but it degenerates into a Kurukshetr when it is infested with demoniacal powers. Kuru means ‘do’; the word is an imperative. As Krishn has said, “Driven by the three properties* *[*Sattwa, tamas and rajas, the three gun or properties or constituent qualities of all material objects and beings. Sattwa is virtue or the quality of goodness; tamas is ignorance or darkness,*

*and rajas is passion or moral blindness.]* born out of prakriti (nature) man is compelled to act; without action he cannot even live for a moment." These properties, virtue,ignorance, and passion, compel him to act. Even in sleep action does not cease, for it is the necessary sustenance for the body. The three properties bind men, from the level of gods to that of the lowest creatures such as worms. So long as the material world and its properties are, kuru must be. Therefore, the sphere of birth and death, of that which is evolved from a previous source or prakriti (nature) is Kurukshetr, whereas the sphere of righteous impulses which guide the Self to God, the highest spiritual reality, is Dharmkshetr.

Archaeologists are engaged in research in Punjab, Kashi, and Prayag to locate Kurukshetr. But the poet of the Geeta has himself suggested, through Krishn, where the war of his sacred poem was fought. "This body is itself, O Arjun, a battlefield, and one who conquers it grows spiritually dexterous by perceiving its essence." He then elaborates the structure of this "battlefield," sphere of action constituted of ten preceptors* *[*The ten organs of sense : five of perception (gyanendriani) and five organs of action (karmendriani).],* the objective and the subjective mind, the ego, the five elements* *[*Primary substances]*, and the three properties. The body itself is a field, a ring or an arena. The forces that clash on this field are twofold, the godly and the ungodly, the divine and the devilish, the offspring of Pandu and those of Dhritrashtr, the forces that are congenial to the essentially divine character of the Self and those which offend and demean it.

The clue to the mystery of the conflict between the opposed impulses begins to be seen when one turns for enlightenment to an exalted sage who has enriched himself with worship and meditation. This field belongs to one who realizes its essence, and the war fought on it is the only real war. History is crowded with wars of the world, but the victors in these wars have but sought in vain for a permanent conquest.

These wars were nothing beyond acts of retribution. True victory lies in subduing matter and in perceiving, as well as becoming one with, the Supreme Spirit that transcends it. This is the only conquest in which there is no prospect of defeat. This is true salvation after which there are no fetters of birth and death.

The mind lying in the abyss of ignorance perceives through one who has mastered the mind and the senses, and thus knows what has transpired on the battlefield, where fighters include even those who have known its reality. Vision is ever in proportion to mastery of the mind and the senses.

**संजय उवाच**

**दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा।**

**आचार्यमुपसंगम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत्  ॥२॥**

[ Sanjay said, "At the time, after having seen the Pandav army standing in battle array, King Duryodhan approached his teacher Dronacharya and spoke thus." ]

Dual conduct itself is Dronacharya. When the awareness dawns that we are alienated from God there arises in the heart an acute hunger for the attainment of that exalted Spirit. Only then do we set out to seek an accomplished teacher, a realized sage (Guru) *[*The Sanskrit equivalent here is guru: an ideal teacher. The function of such a teacher, as it is understood in Hindu thought, is twofold. He, of course, elucidates the scriptures, but, what is more important, he also teaches by the example of his life.].* Between the two opposed impulses, this awareness is the first initiator into wisdom, although the teacher of ultimate excellence will be Yogeshwar Krishn *[*To grasp the spirit of the Geeta it is important to keep in mind that Krishn is a mortal as well as God (Vishnu, equivalent to Brahm- the Supreme Spirit, in his eighth incarnation).]*. himself, an adept in yog *[*Yog : that which unites the Self with the Supreme Spirit. Yogeshwar is an adept in yog.].*

King Duryodhan, an embodiment of excessive attachment to worldly objects, goes to his teacher. Attachment is at the root of all griefs, indeed their sovereign. It tempts one away from the spiritual treasure and so it is named Duryodhan. Only the Soul property is the stable property and it is attachment which generates impurity in it. It draws one to the material world. But it also provides the primary motive for enlightenment. Inquisitiveness is possible only as long as there is attachment, or else only the impeccable Spirit remains.

So, after having seen the Pandav army arrayed, that is, after having glimpsed the righteous impulses that are in tune with the Self, Duryodhan, a victim of attachment, goes to his teacher Dronacharya and says:

**पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम्।**

**व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥३॥**

[ "Behold, O master, this massive army of Pandu's sons marshalled in battle formation by your wise pupil, the son of Drupad (Dhristdyumn)." ]

Dhristdyumn, the son of Drupad, is the steadfast mind that treasures faith in the universal, immutable reality. He is thus the master, the type of righteous impulses that lead to selfless activity in a spirit of egoless reverence to spiritual divinity. "Not means but the determination of mind needs to be firm.''

Let us now review the Pandav army at length.

**अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि।**

**युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥४॥**

[ "Here in the army are many valiant archers, Yuyudhan, Virat and the great martial commander Drupad, who are a worthy match for the brave Arjun and Bheem, and...'' ]

This army is composed of those who can guide souls to the Supreme Spirit, like Bheem who is an embodiment of resolute sentiment, the image of tender devotion Arjun, and many other valiant warriors such as Satyaki, endowed with goodness, Virat and the great warrior leader Drupad, symbolizing consistency and steadfastness on the path of spirituality, and...

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान्।

पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥५॥

[ "Dhrishtketu, Chekitan, and the mighty King of Kashi, as well as Purujeet and Kuntibhoj, and Shaibya, the unparalleled among men and..." ]

Dhrishtketu, the steadfast-in-duty, Chekitan, who can rein in his straying thought and concentrate it on the Supreme Spirit. The King of the holy city of Kashi, an emblem of the sacredness that resides within the world of the body. Purujeet, the one who obtains victory over matter in all its forms-gross, subtle, and instrumental. Kuntibhoj, who conquers world life by doing what is worthy of doing. Then Shaibya, of virtuous conduct.

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान्।

सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥६॥

[ "The valorous Yudhmanyu, the mighty Uttmauj, Saubhadr, and Draupadi's five sons, all great warriors." ]

The heroic Yudhmanyu of warlike temper; Uttmauj with the spirit of abandon that flows from sacred excellence; Abhimanyu (Saubhadr), Subhadra's son, with a mind without fear because it is propped up by righteousness, and the five sons of Draupadi who herself is a form of discernment of the divine, all are great warriors named tenderness, beauty, compassion, spiritual repose and consistency. All of them are

noted for their ability to traverse the path of spiritual fulfillment with perfect skill.

Duryodhan thus enumerates to his teacher about a score of names from the side of the Pandav, which represent some vital principles of divine excellence. Although the monarch of impulses that are alien to the essentially spiritual character of the Self, it is ignorance (attachment) that first motivates us to strive for the realization of the treasure of divinity.

As for his own side, Duryodhan dwells on it but briefly. Had it been an actual, external war, he would have given an elaborate account of his army. But only a few perversions are cited, for they have to be conquered and they are destructible. There are mentioned only about half a dozen of these, at the heart of all of which there yet dwells an unworldly propensity.

**अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम।**

**नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥७॥**

[ "Be it known to you, O the worthiest of the twice-born *[*'Twice-born' because of the spiritual birth or awakening (attainments) that comes through self-study and contemplation.]* (Brahmins), the names of those who are most eminent amongst us, the chiefs of our army; these I now name for your information." ]

"The worthiest of the twice-born." That is how Duryodhan addresses his teacher Dronacharya before he introduces to him the chiefs of his army. "The worthiest of the twice-born" would hardly be an appropriate term of address for a commander-in-chief if the war were a physical, external war. In fact, the Geeta dwells upon the conflict between contradictory innate impulses, upon the dual conduct which is Dronacharya. The world of matter exists and there is duality if we are even in the least isolated from God. However, the urge, too, for

overcoming this duality of object-spirit is derived first from the teacher Dronacharya. It is imperfect knowledge that induces the hunger for enlightenment.

It is now time to have a look at the leaders of the impulses which are hostile to the essentially sacred character of the Self.

**भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः।**

**अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥८॥**

[ "Your venerable self, Bheeshm and Karn, and also Kripa-victor in wars, Ashwatthama and Vikarn, as well as Saumdutti (Bhurishrawa, son of Somdutt)." ]

The commander-in-chief is Dronacharya himself, symbolizing dual conduct. And then there is the grandsire Bheeshm, the very image of delusion. Delusion is the fountainhead of deviation from the ideal state. Since it survives till the very end, delusion is the grandsire. The whole army has perished, but Bheeshm yet lives on. He lies unconscious on his bed of arrows and still continues to breathe. Like Bheeshm, too, are Karn, a betrayer of the sacred character of Self, and the conquering warrior Kripacharya. Kripacharya represents the act of compassion by the seeker in the state before Self-realization. God is the mine of compassion and the sage attains to the same state after fulfillment. But during the period up to accomplishment, so long as the worshipper is removed from God and God is removed from him, when the uncongenial impulses are still alive and strong, and he is besieged by delusion-if the seeker feels compassion at this stage, he is destroyed. For acting with pity, Sita had to undergo penance in Lanka for years* *(*Sita was the wife of Lord Ram, who was the main character of the epic Ramayan. Mother Kaikayi banished him as a recluse to the forests. Obeying the order of his mother Lord Ram stayed in the jungles. Sita appealed to Lord Ram to bring her a "Golden Deer". Ram in order to fulfill his wife's desire, went after the deer but instructed her for her protection not to leave the safety of her meditation hut no matter what the temptation, while she was alone, until he returned. Once*

*Ram had left, seeing Sita alone and unprotected, Ravan-Evil king of Lanka who lusted after Sita and wanted her for his wife approached the hut in the disguise of a sage. Sita compassionately came out to offer alms to the apparent sage. Exploiting the situation, Ravan carried Sita away and Sita had to stay in Lanka held captive for many months thereafter. If Sita had waited for Ram to come back, as he had instructed her and not left the safety of her meditation hut out of an ill advised (what in Buddhist literature is called ''idiot compassion''- that is neglecting to take care of your own well being in the name of helping others) feeling of pity and compassion for the begging sage, then she could have avoided all the torture and troubles that she then had to undergo.)*.

Vishwamitr fell from grace because he felt tenderness at such a stage. Maharshi Patanjali, the preceptor of yog-aphorism, has expressed a similar view. "Attainments made, through perfect meditation are indeed attainments, but they are also as formidable obstacles in the way of the endeavour of the individual Soul for identification with the Supreme Spirit as sensual desire, anger, greed, and delusion." Goswami Tulsidas has said, "O Garud, manifold are obstacles built up by maya* *[*Maya : the illusion by which the unreal, physical universe is regarded as truly existent and distinct from the Supreme Spirit.]* when we strive to unravel the knots of properties of nature-mere distortions of truth. Attainment of sanctity elevates, but the mind conjures up one temptation after another.''

The illusory maya obstructs in many ways. It brings men accomplishments and untold wealth, and even turns them into holy beings. If a being of such accomplishment just passes by, even a dying man is revived. Notwithstanding the recovery of the patient, however, the seeker shall be destroyed if he regards the cure as his own achievement. Instead of one sickness a thousand maladies will swarm upon his mind, the process of reverent contemplation of the divine will be interrupted, and he will so stray from the right path that the world of matter overwhelms him. If the goal is distant and the seeker feels compassion, this one act alone is sufficient to result in the debacle of his whole army. So he has to be on his guard against the feeling of compassion until the moment of final attainment, although at the same time it is also true that

compassion is the hallmark of a saint. But before ultimate fulfillment, compassion is the mightiest warrior among the evil, demoniacal impulses. It is thus that Ashwatthama is an image of inordinate attachment, Vikarn of indecision, and Bhurishrawa of perplexity and confusion. They are all chiefs of the outward flowing current of life.

**अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः।**

**नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥९॥**

[ "And (there are) many other skilled warriors, too, equipped with numerous arms, who have forsaken hope of life for my sake.'' ]

And many other valiant warriors are resolved, Duryodhan intimates to Dronacharya, to fight for his sake even at the cost of their life. But there is no precise enumeration of them. Duryodhan then points out the innate qualities with which each of the two armies is fortified.

**अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम्।**

**पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥१०॥**

[ "Our army defended* *[*In the ancient Hindu art of warfare, each army had of course a commander-in-chief, but it had also a champion, a man of valour-courage and intelligence, who acted as its "defender."]* by Bheeshm is unconquerable, while their army defended by Bheem is easy to vanquish.'' ]

Duryodhan's army, "defended" by Bheeshm, is invincible, whereas the opposing army of the Pandav, "defended" by Bheem, is easy to conquer. The use of ambiguous puns such as a paryaptam and aparyaptam* *[*Two contradictory interpretations are possible because aparyaptam means both "insufficient" or "unlimited;" and paryaptam, both "adequate" and "limited."]* is itself a sign of Duryodhan's doubtful state of mind. So we have to look carefully at the power that Bheeshm represents on which all the Kaurav hopes rest, as well as the quality symbolized by Bheem which the

Pandav-endowed with the treasure of divinity-rely upon. Duryodhan then gives his final estimate of the situation.

**अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः।**

**भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥११॥**

[ "So, while keeping to your respective stations in the several divisions, all of you should doubtlessly protect Bheeshm alone on all sides." ]

Duryodhan commands all his chiefs to keep to their posts and yet protect Bheeshm on all sides. The Kaurav cannot be defeated if Bheeshm is safe and alive. So it is obligatory for all the Kaurav chiefs to defend Bheeshm rather than fight with the Pandav. This is intriguing. After all, what kind of "defender" is this Bheeshm who cannot even defend him self? What complicates the matter even more is that the Kaurav are also wholly dependent on him. So they have to devise all possible measures of defence for him. This is certainly no physical warrior. Bheeshm is delusion. So long as delusion is alive, unrighteous impulses cannot be vanquished. "Invincible" here means "difficult to vanquish" rather than "impossible to vanquish." As Goswami Tulsidas has said, "The most difficult to conquer is the hostile world of matter and the one who subdues it is indeed heroic.''

If delusion ceases, ignorance too ceases to exist and the residues of negative feelings such as excessive attachment hasten to a quick demise. Bheeshm is blessed with death by wish. So the death of desire and death of delusion are one and the same. This idea has been so lucidly expressed by Sant Kabir: "Since desire is the maker of birth and illusion, and it is desire that creates the material world, he who abandons desire is the one who cannot be conquered.''

That which is free from delusion is eternal and unmanifest. Desire is illusion and progenitor of the world. In Kabir's view, "the Self which achieves freedom from desire is united with the fathomless,

eternal, boundless reality. One who is free from desire dwells within the Self and never falls from grace, for he has his being in the Supreme Spirit.” At the beginning there are numerous desires, but eventually there remains only a longing for the realization of God. The fulfillment, too, of this wish also marks the end of desire. Had there been something higher, greater, or more precious than God, one, would surely have craved for it. But when there is nothing beyond or above him, what else can be desired? When all things that can be had are achieved, the very roots of desire are destroyed and delusion perishes utterly. This is Bheeshm’s death by wish. Thus, defended by Bheeshm, Duryodhan’s army is invincible in every respect. Ignorance is present as long as there is delusion. When delusion is dead, ignorance also dies.

The Pandav army, on the contrary, defended as it is by Bheem, is easy to conquer. Bheem is the very image of sentiment. “God dwells in feeling.’’ Krishn has described it as devotion. It lays hold on even God. The sentiment of devotion is a pious impulse of flawless perfection. It is a protector of righteousness. On the one hand so resourceful that it brings about realization of the Supreme Spirit, on the other hand it is also so delicate and fragile that this day’s fidelity and adherence often turn into nothingness and even outright privation on the next day. Today we admire a sage for his virtue, but the very next day we grumble and cavil because we have seen him relishing delicacies. Devotion is shaken by suspicion of even the slightest flaw in the loved one. The impulse of righteousness is undermined and the ties with the object of affectionate devotion are broken. So it is that the Pandav army defended by Bheem can be conquered with ease. Maharshi Patanjali has given expression to a similar view. “Only meditation practised for a long time with constant devotion and reverence can be firm.’’

Now let us listen to the flourish of the warriors’ conches.

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥१२॥

[ “To Duryodhan’s delight then, his mighty grandsire and the eldest of the Kaurav (Bheeshm) blew his conch to blare forth a lion-like roar.’’ ]

Conches are blown after the Kaurav have taken stock of their strength. The trumpeting of conches is a declaration of the intention, of each of the chiefs, of what he can offer after conquest. The mighty grandsire Bheeshm, the eldest of the Kaurav, blows his conch to produce a lion-like roar which gladdens Duryodhan’s heart. The lion represents the terrible, tooth-and-claw, aspect of nature. Our hair stands on end and our hearts beat violently when we hear the roar of a lion in a still, solitary forest even though we are miles away from the beast. Fear is a property of nature, not of God. Bheeshm is the very image of delusion. If delusion prevails, it will enwrap the material world’s forest of fear which we inhabit in yet another shroud of fear to make the existing dread even more frightening. Delusion cannot offer anything else except this. So renunciation of the material world is the right step for one who quests for Self-realization. Worldly inclinations are like a mirage-a mere shadow of ignorance, and the Kaurav have nothing to declare against this. Numerous conches from their side are trumpeted simultaneously, but they altogether inspire no other feeling except fear. Fear, although in varying degrees, is born out of each perversion. Similar is also the message of the conches of the other Kaurav chiefs.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः।

सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥१३॥

[ “Then there abruptly arose a tumult of conches and kettledrums, tabors, drums, and cow-horns.’’ ]

After Bheeshm's blowing of his conch, numerous other conches, drums, and trumpets are sounded together, and they make an awesome noise. The Kaurav have no message other than that of fear. Intoxicated with a sense of false success, the outward-looking impulses that offend and demean the human Soul render the bonds of infatuation yet stronger.

Now the Pandav, representing righteous impulses that are in harmony with the divine character of the Self, respond to the Kaurav challenge with their own declarations, the first of which is made by Yogeshwar Krishn himself.

**ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ।**

**माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥१४॥**

[ "Then, too, Madhav (Krishn) and Pandu's son (Arjun), seated in the magnificent chariot to which white steeds were yoked, blew their celestial conches.'' ]

After the Kaurav, Krishn and Arjun, riding in their magnificent, sacred chariot drawn by flawlessly white horses ("white" symbolizes purity), also blow their "celestial" conches. "Celestial" means beyond the material world. Yogeshwar Krishn's transcendental message is a promise to render unto souls the most auspicious, unworldly existence that is beyond the worlds of both mortals and gods, and verily the whole universe (Brahmlok)* *[*One of the three worlds of Hindu thought: Mrityulok (the earth-the world of mortals), Devlok (heaven-the world of gods), and Brahmlok (the world of Brahma who is the most hoary and the grandsire of all gods, yet not eternal).]*, which are all afflicted with the fear of birth and death. The chariot under his charge is not made of gold and silver and wood; everything about him is celestial, the chariot, the conch and, therefore, also his message. Beyond these worlds there is only the one unique and indescribable

God. Krishn’s message is of establishing a direct contact with this Supreme Being. But how will he effect this state?

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः।

पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥१५॥

[ ‘‘While Hrishikesh (Krishn) blew his conch Panchjanya and Dhananjay (Arjun) the conch named Devdutt, the Vrikodar* *[*Vrikodar is literally interpreted, the one with a wolf’s belly which is never full. Likewise, a devotee’s heart longing for God is never satiated.]* (Bheem) of awesome deeds blew the great conch Paundr.’’ ]

So Hrishikesh (lord of the senses), who knows all the mysteries of the human heart, blows the conch Panchjanya. This is a declaration of his intent to restrain the five organs of perception which correspond to word, touch, form, taste, and smell, and to transmute their inclinations into devotion. Exerting control on the wild senses and disciplining them into faithful servitors is the gift from an accomplished teacher; the gift, indeed, from the admired God. Krishn is a yogi, an ideal teacher. As Arjun says in the Geeta, “Lord, I am thy disciple.” It is only an accomplished teacher; who can make us relinquish all objects of sensual pleasure, and to see and listen to and touch nothing except the coveted God.

Dhananjay (the victor of wealth) is the affectionate devotion that attains to the state of divine exaltation. This devotion is a feeling of tenderness for the desired object, which includes within itself all the experiences of devotees, even pangs of separation and occasional disenchantment and tears. There should be nothing for a devotee except the longed-for God. If the devotion to him is perfect, it embraces the virtues that provide access to the Supreme Spirit. Dhananjay is another name of this faculty. One kind of wealth is the external riches which are needed for physical sustenance, but that has nothing to do with the Self.

The really lasting wealth of man, which he can truly call his own, is realization of his Self, the God within. In the Brihadaranyak Upanishad, Yagnavalkya teaches the same to his wife Maitreyi when she asks him, “My lord, if this whole earth belonged to me with all its riches, should I through its possession attain immortality?” The sage replies, “No, your life would be like that of the wealthy. None can possibly hope to be immortal through wealth.’’

Bheem of awesome deeds blows his great conch Paundr, which denotes sentiment. The heart is the spring as well as the habitat of feeling. This is why Bheem is called Vrikodar, the large-hearted. You are attached to a child, but that attachment belongs essentially to your heart. It only manifests itself in the child. Sentiment is fathomless and mighty, and this sentiment is Bheem’s great conch that is now blown. The affection that he represents is embodied in sentiment. That is why Bheem blows the conch named Paundr. However, although sentiment is mighty, it can be so only through the medium of love. Goswami Tulsidas admits that he has known the omnipresence of God only through its manifestation in love.

**अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः।**

**नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥१६॥**

[ “King Yudhisthir, the son of Kunti, blew the conch Anantvijay, whereas Nakul and Sahdev blew their conches Sughosh and Manipushpak.” ]

King Yudhisthir blows the conch Anantvijay (endless conquest). Kunti is the very image of dutifulness; and Yudhisthir, the embodiment of dharm (natural piety). If one’s adherence to dharm is steady, Anantvijay will bring about the absorption of the Self in the boundless God. The one who is firm in battle is Yudhisthir: one who is unshaken by the conflicts between Self and the material world-between the body and the transcendental Soul, and to whom the essence of the sphere of action

has been revealed. He is enabled eventually, by God who alone is real, ceaseless, and immutable, to overcome all the contradictions.

Nakul, who is a symbol of restraint* *[*In yog philosophy, restraint of the mind is accepted as the second of the eight principal steps of meditation.]*, blows the conch named Sughosh. As restraint grows firmer, evil is subdued and the dominance of righteousness is proclaimed. Sahdev, the adherer to truth, blows on the conch which bears the name of Manipushpak. Sages have described each breath as a precious ruby. "What a pity that we squander the jewels of our breath on idle gossip!" One kind of satsang is the moral discourse we hear from noble men, but the real spiritual discourse is internal. According to Krishn, the Self alone is true and eternal. True satsang comes about when the mind reins itself in from all externals and dwells with the Self. This adherence to truth is cultivated by incessant reflection, meditation, and Samadhi* *[*Samadhi- perfect absorption of the mind and heart in the one contemplated object, i.e. God.]*. The more joy one feels in dwelling with the one reality, the more restraint one gains over each breath, the mind, and the instruments by which objects of sense affect the Self. The day they are totally restrained is the day when we are absorbed in the ultimate essence. Providing, like a good instrument, harmonious accompaniment to the song of the Self is true satsang.

The physical ruby is hard, but the jewel of breath is even more tender than a flower. Flowers fall and wither soon after they bloom, and we can never say that we shall live until the next breath. But if there is true adherence to the Self, it leads us to realize the highest goal through providing control over each breath. There is nothing to proclaim beyond this, although each device is helpful in traversing a certain stretch of the path of spiritual perfection* *[*State of detachment from the material universe and renunciation of worldly desires.]*. Sanjay further speaks on the subject:

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः।

धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥१७॥

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते।

सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥१८॥

[ "The King of Kashi, a great bowman, Shikhandi who dwells in the Supreme Spirit, the unvanquished Dhristdyumn, Virat and Satyaki, Drupad and the sons of Draupadi, and Subhadra's son of powerful arms (Abhimanyu), all blew, O lord of the earth, their own conches.'' ]

The sacred city of Kashi is an emblem of the sacredness that resides in the physical body. When a man withdraws his mind and sense organs from all physical things and concentrates on the Self within his body, he is privileged to merge with and dwell within God. The body which is capable of such a union is Kashi. The Supreme Spirit dwells in and pervades every single body. So "parmeshwasah" here means dwelling in the Supreme Spirit rather than a "mighty warrior.''

Shikhandi represents the rejection of shikha-sutr* *[*Shikha is a lock of hair grown on the crown and sutr is the sacred or sacrificial thread worn by Hindus. According to the Mahabharat, in order to avert the calamity of her father-in-law Hiranyavarman's, to whose daughter she was married as an act of deception, invading the kingdom of her father Drupad, Shikhandi managed-by severe austerities-to exchange her sex with a yaksh. Thus transformed in sex, Shikhandi afterwards in the Mahabharat war succeeded in killing Bheeshm, who declined to fight with a woman.]* (sacred signs traditionally worn by Hindus). There are people who believe they have achieved renunciation just because they have got their heads shaved clean, cast away their sacred threads, and stopped lighting fire. But they are mistaken, for, as a matter of fact, shikha symbolizes a goal which has to be attained, and sutr the merits of action in a previous existence (sanskar*) *[*The word has several other meanings, too, such as perfection , sacred rites, etc.]*. The chain of sanskar is intact so long as God has yet to be realized.

How can there be true renunciation till the moment of that fulfillment? Till then we are only wayfarers. Delusion subsides only when the desired God is attained and the merits of previous deeds are reduced to nothing. So it is Shikhandi who proves to be the undoing of Bheeshm, the image of delusion and self-deception. Shikhandi represents the unique quality that is essential for the man who chooses the path of reflection, a truly mighty fighter on his side.

Dhristdyumn, the steadfast mind that treasures faith in the universal, immutable divinity, and Virat, capable of perceiving the omnipresence of the great God, are the main constituents of sacred excellence. Satyaki is truthfulness. There can never be a fall from piety as long as there is truthfulness or the desire to ponder over truth, it always protects us from being routed in the war between spirit and matter.

Drupad, representing the ideal of consistency and steadfastness in the performance of duty, the five sons of meditation-like Draupadi, symbols of compassion, tenderness, beauty, and spiritual repose, who are all great warriors providing assistance to the quest for the desired goal, and the long-armed Abhimanyu, all blow their separate conches. “Arm” is a symbol of the sphere of action. When the mind is freed from fear, its reach is immensely enlarged.

So Sanjay addresses Dhritrashtr and acquaints him with how the chiefs of the Pandav army have made their proclamations with their conches. Each one of them is a prerequisite of the skill of traversing a certain length of the way to spiritual emancipation. Their observance is necessary and that is why they are enumerated in detail. However, there is, after these preliminary stages, that stretch of the path which is beyond the perceiving mind and intellect. This is the length along which one is enabled to travel only by the blessedness of the great God’s awakening within the Self. He stands up from the Self as vision and is self-evident.

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत्।

नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥१९॥

[ “The loud tumult, reverberating through heaven and earth, pierced the hearts of Dhritrashtr’s sons.’’ ]

The great tumult, echoing through heaven and earth, rends the hearts of Dhritrashtr’s sons. There is the Pandav army, too, but the hearts that are rent are only those of Dhritrashtr’s sons. When the manna of Panchjanya, made up of true knowledge, realization of the infinite, destruction of evil, and affirmation of piety, begins to flow, the Kaurav hearts with their unrighteous and outward-looking impulses cannot but be rent. Their power wanes by and by. And if the process meets with success, infatuation ceases to exist altogether.

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान्कपिध्वजः।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥२०॥

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते।

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥२१॥

यावदेतान्निरिक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान्।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥२२॥

“Then, O King, after viewing the sons of Dhritrashtr in array, when the discharge of missiles was about to commence, Kunti’s son (Arjun), whose ensign bore the image of Hanuman, raised his bow and spoke to Hrishikesh thus: ‘O Achyut (Krishn), keep my chariot between the two armies so that I may watch those who are formed up for combat and know whom I have to fight in the ensuing battle.’ ’’]

Sanjay, an epitome of self restraint, endeavours to enlighten the mind lying under a pall of ignorance by pointing out that apart from the other exemplary captains of the Pandav army there is the Hanuman-ensign of Arjun. Hanuman, a symbol of true renunciation. Disenchantment with the world and the desire to renounce it are the mark of Arjun's battle-standard. Some interpreters have named this standard"monkey-ensign" because of its frenzied fluttering. But this is unacceptable, for the primate exhibited on the ensign is no common monkey but Hanuman himself who has risen above all distinctions. To him honour and dishonour are the same. Giving up lust for material objects which have been heard or seen, of worldly objects and sensual pleasures, is renunciation. So, after having seen Dhritrashtr's sons arrayed just when missiles are about to be launched, Arjun, whose distinctive motto is renunciation, lifts his bow and speaks to Hrishikesh, the lord of senses and knower of the mysteries of the heart, addressing him as the "infallible." He requests his charioteer to station the chariot between the two armies. His words, however, are not words of command to a charioteer, but a prayer by a devotee to the worshipped one, an accomplished teacher. But why does he want Krishn to park the chariot?

Arjun wants to ascertain well who the warriors intent upon battle are, whom he has to fight in this business of warfare.

**योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः।**

**धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥२३॥**

[ "Since I wish to observe those who have assembled here to fight for pleasing Dhritrashtr's wicked-minded son (Duryodhan) in the battle.'' ]

Arjun wants the chariot to be parked in front of the Kaurav so that he may see the kings, desirous of battle, who have joined the evil-minded Duryodhan for the sake of his happiness-for Duryodhan who

represents excessive attachment. Arjun wishes to observe well the kings who have assembled to fight in the war for the cause of infatuation.

**संजय उवाच**

**एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत।**

**सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम्  ॥२४॥**

**भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम्।**

**उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरूनिति  ॥२५॥**

[ ''Thus addressed by Gudakesh* *[*One who has conquered sleep.]*, O descendant of Bharat (Dhritrashtr), Hrishikesh parked the unique chariot between the two armies, in front of Bheeshm, Dron, and all the other kings, and said, 'Behold, O son of Pritha* *[*"Pritha" is another name of Kunti. There is also in "Parth"and association with parthiv which means "made of dust."' The meaning is similar to that of "Dust thou art."]* (Arjun), the assembled Kuru.' '' ]

Sanjay informs Dhritrashu how on being requested by Arjun, who has mastered sleep, Krishn, who knows all that is to know of the mind and heart, parks the chariot of unexcelled beauty in the midst of all the kings who have staked out claims on the earth which is the body in macrocosm, and asks Parth to behold the assembled Kaurav. The "excellent" chariot in question is made of neither gold nor silver, nor of any material substance. Excellence is defined in this world in terms of its agreeableness or disagreeableness to the mortal body. But such a view is misleading, for that alone is excellence which is always one with the real, the Self, and which has no unrighteousness or impurity about it.

**तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान्।**

**आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातॄन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा  ॥२६॥**

श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि।

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान्  ॥२७॥

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत्।

[ "Parth then saw, mustered in the two armies, uncles, granduncles, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends, as well as fathers-in-law and well-wishers. Seeing all these kinsmen assembled together and overwhelmed by intense pity, he spoke thus in great sorrow:" ]

Parth, the perfect marksman who has made a chariot of his earthformed body* *[*In the Upanishad Katha, the King of Death says to Nachiket, *Know that the body is the chariot, the Self the rider, the intellect is the charioteer, and the mind the reins.'']*, looks at the army and sees his kinsmen. What is noteworthy is that in the two armies he sees only his own family, the families of maternal uncles, and of fathers-in-law, friends, and teachers. According to scholarly estimates, the two armies of the Mahabharat consisted of eighteen akshauhini chariots, elephants, horses, and foot soldiers, which is approximately 650 million, a very large number indeed. It hardly needs saying how the world is faced today with numerous grave problems of food and housing on account of rising population. So what are we to make of it when we are told that just three or four families of Arjun's kinsmen are so large in number? Is it possible for any family to be so huge? The answer must be in the negative. So what we have here is a portrayal not of physical armies but of the sphere of the mind and heart. Overcome with deep compassion, when he sees all his kinsmen mustered for battle, Arjun speaks in grief. He grieves because he sees that he has to fight his own family.

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम्  ॥२८॥

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति।

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥२९॥

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते।

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥३०॥

[ “Arjun said, ’Seeing these kith and kin, mustered with the purpose of waging war, O Krishn, my limbs grow weak, my mouth is dry, my body trembles, my hair stands on end, the Gandeev (Arjun’s bow) slips from my hand, my skin is burning all over, I am unable to stand, and my mind is bewildered.’’ ]

Looking at the gathering of his kinsmen, Arjun is unnerved. His body grown inert, his mouth is parched, his limbs tremble, and his hair stands erect. The Gandeev falls from his hand and his skin is hot. He is sorely distressed by the prospect of a war in which his own kinsmen face him. He is confused. He bewails that he cannot even stand properly and look ahead.

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव।

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥३१॥

[ “I see, O Madhav (Krishn), inauspicious portents, and I can perceive no prefix in the idea of slaughtering kinsmen in the battle.’’ ]

Arjun sees adverse signs of the impending war. He does not see anything propitious in the slaying of his own family. How can any good result from such killing?

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥३२॥

[ “I aspire, O Krishn, after neither victory nor a realm and its pleasures for of what avail is sovereignty to us, O Govind (Krishn), or enjoyment, or even life itself?” ]

Arjun’s whole family is on the brink of war. So he does not wish for either victory or the kingdom that this victory may bring him, or even the pleasures of that kingdom. Of what use will be a kingdom or enjoyment or life to him? He then states the reasons for his reluctance to fight in the war:

**येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च।**

**त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥३३॥**

[ “They for whose sake we crave for a kingdom, pleasures, and enjoyments are formed up here, putting at stake both their life and wealth.’’ ]

The family, for whose sake Arjun has desired the happiness of a kingdom and other pleasures, is now mustered on the battlefield despairing of its life. If he had desired a kingdom, it was for them. If he had hungered for the pleasures of wealth and indulgence, it was because he wanted to enjoy it along with his kith and kin. But he now desires neither a kingdom nor pleasures, nor enjoyment, because he sees his kinsmen standing against him without any hope of life. Whatever he had desired was dear to him for their sake. But he does not need these things if he has to get them at the cost of his kinsmen. Desires remain as long as there are family ties. Even a poor man having only a wretched hovel to live in will not accept an empire extending over the entire length and breadth of the world if for this he has to kill his family, friends, and kinsmen. Arjun says the same thing. He is fond of pleasures and he loves victory, but of what good can they be to him if the very people for whom he desires these rewards are no longer with him?

Of what use will enjoyment of pleasures be in their absence? After all, who are the people he will have to kill in the war?

**आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः।**

**मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥३४॥**

**एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन।**

**अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥३५॥**

[ "Teachers, uncles, nephews as well as granduncles, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandnephews, brothers-in-law, and other kinsmen. Though they might slay me, I yet have no desire to kill them, O Madhusudan* *[*An epithet of Vishnu, the first deity of the Hindu Trinity, meaning "Killer of the demon Madhu" and also "destroyer of arrogance."]* (Krishn), even for a realm made up of the three worlds, still less for this earth alone.'' ]

The people to be slain are Arjun's own flesh and blood. As he tells Krishn sorrowfully, he does not wish to harm his kinsmen although in doing so he might lose his own life at their hands, even for ruling over all the three worlds.

In an army formed of approximately 650 million men Arjun can see only his own family. Who really are these innumerable kinsmen? Arjun verily is an image of tender devotion. His dilemma is the one that faces every devotee when he sets out on the path of worshipful adoration (bhajan). It is everyone's desire that he should attain the highest reality by reverence and worship. But he is filled with despair when, under an experienced and accomplished teacher's tutelage, he comes to understand the fundamental nature of the conflict between the material body and the divine Self, and realizes against whom he has to wage his war. He wishes that his father's family, his wife's family, his maternal uncle's family, people who love him, friends, and teachers should all live with him in happiness, and that, while providing for all of

them, he should also attain to God. So he is confused when confronted with the fact that in order to forge ahead in his task of worship he has to abandon his family. Because of his attachment, the prospect of severing the bonds of kinship confuses and unnerves him.

My noble teacher, the revered Paramhans* *[*The author's teacher-preceptor. Paramhans is an honorific title used for an ascetic of the highest order, one who has learnt perfect control of his senses by abstract meditation.]* Parmanand Ji used to say, "To be a sadhu (ascetic) is the same as to die." Even if the universe has beings whom he regards as living, there is no one whom the ascetic can regard as belonging to his own family. As long as there is such a one, the feeling of attachment remains. As for this weakness, the one who is striving to realize his Self is a winner only when he rejects and destroys his attachment as well as all the other associated feelings. What is this world but an extension of the ties of attachment? What is there in it for us in the absence of these bonds? The world as we know it is only an extension of the mind. Yogeshwar Krishn has portrayed the same extension of the mind as the world. The man who has withstood and subdued its power has conquered the whole universe. Krishn tells Arjun in the nineteenth verse of Chapter 5, "The whole cosmos is overcome even in this world by those whose minds repose in equality." Such a state of calm, of mental equipoise, is made possible by the complete annihilation of ego. This frees the mind from its self-centered subservience to the material world. After ego has ceased to exist, only the Self remains in a pure state. So this is the way to attainment of salvation and final beatitude (brahmavastha) which transcends the transitory life of nature. It is thus that those who have realized this state are not subject to the limitations of the material world.

It is not that only Arjun is confused. Affectionate attachment resides in every heart, and everyone with such a feeling is in a state of confusion. Kith and kin are always in the foreground of a man's

consciousness. At the beginning he believes that his sacred adoration will be helpful in his endeavour to make his kinsmen happy. He looks forward to enjoying his acquisitions along with them. But what shall he do with the happiness if his own people are no longer with him? So is it with Arjun. His vision has so far been limited to the pleasures that can be had from a kingdom and heaven. He has till now envisaged the ultimate happiness in terms of heaven and a realm composed of the three worlds. If there is any reality beyond this, Arjun yet has no inkling of it.

**निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन।**

**पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥३६॥**

[ "What happiness can we have, O Janardan* *[*Yet another epithet of Krishn, meaning "one who is worshipped-solicited for prosperity and emancipation.]* (Krishn), from slaying these sons of Dhritrashtr? Only sin will fall to our lot if we kill even these wicked men." ]

What happiness can Arjun gain from killing Dhritrashtr's sons? Dhritrashtr denotes the "insolent or profligate nation,"* *[*"Dhrisht" (profligacy) + "rashtr" (nation) = Dhritrashtr.]* and born from it is Duryodhan, the image of infatuation. But shall even the slaying of such an evil kinsman make Arjun and Krishn happy? The Kaurav are unrighteous, but the Pandav will be only guilty of sin if they kill them. We call men evildoers if they adopt impious ways for their livelihood. In fact, however, the worst felons are those who put obstructions in the way of the Self. The gravest offenders in this respect are lust, wrath, avarice, and inordinate attachment which obstruct one's realization of the Self.

**तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान्।**

**स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥३७॥**

[ "So it is not for us to kill Dhritrashtr's sons, for how indeed can we be happy, O Madhav (Krishn), if we slaughter our own kinsmen?" ]

Is it not surprising that the Kaurav are at this moment seen as kith and kin? Didn’t they come to the battlefield as foes? In truth, physical relationship arises from ignorance. He is my maternal uncle; here is my wife’s family; this is the community of my own people. What are all these, but ignorance? We have people who are affectionate to us and we have our family, and we have our world, but all these we have only as long as there is attachment. All such ties are demolished when there is no attachment. That is why even sworn enemies now appear to Arjun as kinsmen. He asks Krishn how they can be happy by killing their kinsmen. Without ignorance and attachment the idea of family cannot exist. Paradoxically, however, it is this ignorance that also provides the initial urge for knowledge. Some great men like Bhartrihari and Tulsidas were driven to renunciation by their spouses, whereas there are examples of many others who have gone the same way because of their disillusionment with the conduct of a stepmother.

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥३८॥

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम्।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥३९॥

[ “Although, with their minds vitiated by greed, they (the Kaurav) have no awareness of the evil they do in destroying families and in being treacherous to friends, why should we, O Janardan, who know that it is evil to destroy families, not turn away from the sinful act?” ]

Straying from righteousness because of their arrogance and avarice, the Kaurav are blind to the sin they commit by destroying families and practising treachery against friends. This is their error. But why, Arjun wishes to know from Krishn, should they themselves, knowing the evils of destroying families, not desist from the crime? What deserves

special notice here is Arjun's belief that not only he, but Krishn, too, is about to make the same error. So he also indirectly accuses Krishn. Every novice taking refuge in an accomplished teacher reasons in the same way. Arjun is under the impression that perhaps the problem that is bothering him has not yet occurred to, Krishn. All the same, they are both reasonable men and it is required of them to think of the evil consequences of destroying a family.

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः।

धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥४०॥

[ "In case of the destruction of a family its eternal sacred traditions are lost, and impiety afflicts the whole family with the loss of its values.'' ]

Until now Arjun has viewed family traditions as the eternal (Sanatan) Dharm. And he also believes that with the loss of these traditions, families are laden with sin.

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः।

स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥४१॥

[ "When sin prevails, O Krishn, women of the family stray from virtue, and when they are unchaste, O descendant of the 'Vrishnis, (Varshneya: Krishn), there is generated an unholy mixture of classes (varnsankar).'' ]

When unrighteous ways dominate a family, its women lose their chastity and there arises an intermingling of different classes, of incompatible cultures and ways of living. According to Arjun, this sinful intermingling occurs when women lose their virtue. But Krishn contradicts this: "I am fully contented in the Self and there is nothing more precious which is beyond my reach. Yet I continue to practise meditation and renunciation, and urge others to the same. But these are only means and not the goal, and when the goal is achieved who cares for the means? So if the achiever such as I neglects the means, his

followers of an inferior merit will emulate him and they, too, will give up the required means. Confused and misled from the path of Self-realization, they then perish.” Lacking in true achievement, they only swagger emptily as if they were perfect. This imitation creates a chaos. There remains no distinction between the deserving and the undeserving. This confusion is varnsankar and the teacher himself is held responsible for this disorder. That is why an ideal teacher always teaches by his own conduct.

For a while, however, he chooses to remain silent, and Arjun goes on with his elaboration of the evils of varnsankar.

संकरो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च।

पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥४२॥

[ “The unholy intermingling of classes condemns the destroyer of the family as well as the family itself to hell, for their ancestors, deprived of the offerings of obsequial cakes of rice and water libations, fall (from their heavenly abode).’’ ]

It is a quality of varnsankar to despatch families and their destroyers to hell. Divested of obsequial gifts of rice cakes, their forefathers also lose their heavenly home. The present is destroyed, the ancestors of the past fall, and the posterity to come will also descend to hell. Not only this, but-

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसंकरकारकैः।

उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥४३॥

[ “The sin committed by destroyers of families, which causes an intermingling of classes, puts to an end the timeless dharm of both caste and family.’’ ]

According to Arjun, the evils of varnsankar destroy the traditions of both families and their destroyers. He holds the view that family traditions are changeless and eternal. But Krishn refutes this later by asserting that Self alone is the changeless and eternal Sanatan Dharm* *[*Sanatan is "the eternal." Sanatan Dharm may thus be interpreted approximately as that immutable (shashwat), eternal, divine principle that animates all things and beings, and which enables them to realize themselves. Sanatan is also the God almighty and virtues that reveal him. Values that reveal him within the heart are Sanatam Dharm.]*. Before a man has realized the essence of this Sanatan Dharm, he gives credence to some tradition or the other. Such is Arjun's belief at the moment, but in Krishn's view it is a mere delusion.

**उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन।**

**नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥४४॥**

[ "We have heard, O Janardan, that hell is indeed the miserable habitat, for an infinite time, of men, the traditions of whose families have been destroyed." ]

Men whose family traditions are destroyed have to dwell in hell endlessly. What is significant though is that Arjun has only heard so. As he believes, with the destruction of a family, not only its traditions but also its changeless, everlasting dharm is destroyed. He thus equates traditions with Sanatan Dharm. It is well known, he says, how a man has to suffer in hell for the loss of his dharm. But he has only heard so: not seen, but only heard of it.

**अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम्।**

**यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥४५॥**

[ "Tempted by the pleasures of temporal power, alas, what a heinous crime have we resolved to commit by killing our own kith and kin!" ]

How regrettable that although possessed of wisdom, they are yet determined to commit a grave sin by being intent upon killing their own family because of greed of regal power and its pleasures. At this point Arjun regards his knowledge as in no way less than that of Krishn. All seekers, as it has already been said, feel thus at the outset. According to Mahatma Buddh, so long as a man has only partial knowledge he regards himself as a repository of great wisdom, but as he begins to learn the second half of the knowledge he has to acquire, he regards himself as a great fool. Arjun considers himself a wise man in the same way. He takes the liberty of persuading Krishn that it is simply not possible that their sinful act can have any propitious outcome, and also that their resolve to destroy their family is motivated by sheer greed of sovereignty and its pleasures. They are really committing a terrible error. Convinced that the error is not only his, he has a dig at Krishn when he remarks that the error is also his. And, at last, he delivers his final view of the matter:

**यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः।**

**धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥४६॥**

[ "I shall indeed prefer the prospect of being slain by the armed sons of Dhritrashtr while (I am myself) unarmed and unresisting.'' ]

His death at the hands of Dhritrashr's's armed sons, while he himself is unarmed and unresisting, will be according to Arjun a fortunate event. History will then remember him as a magnanimous man who had averted a war by sacrificing his own life. People forsake their lives for the happiness of tender, innocent children so that the family may thrive. People go abroad and live in luxurious mansions, but after two days they begin to pine for their discarded hovels. Such is the strength of attachment. It is behind Arjun's feeling that it will be propitious even if he

is killed unresisting by the armed sons of Dhritrashtr, for it will ensure the children of the family a prosperous and happy life.

**संजय उवाच**

**एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत्।**

**विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥४७॥**

[ Sanjay said, "Speaking thus and smitten by grief, in the midst of the battlefield, Arjun put aside his bow and arrows, and sat down in the chariot.'' ]

In other words, Arjun withdraws from the conflict between the physical body-the sphere of action-and the Self within with his awareness of God.

---------------------------------------------------------------------

The Geeta is an investigation of the war of kshetr-kshetragya: of the conflict between the material body, engaged in action, and the accomplished Soul that is ever conscious of his oneness with the Supreme Spirit. A song of revelation, it strives to demonstrate what God must be in all his divine splendour. The sphere that the song celebrates is a battlefield: the body with its dual, opposed impulses that compose the "Dharmkshetr" and the "Kurukshetr.

The first chapter, as we have seen, elaborates the respective structure and base of the strength that characterize the adversaries. The sounding of conches proclaims their valour as well as intentions. There is then a review of the armies that are, to fight in the war. Their numerical strength is estimated at approximately 650 million, but the number is really infinite. Nature embodies two points of view, relevant to the opposed impulses that clash on the field of action. There is first the inward looking mind that always aims at realization of the Self and looks up to the adored God. On the other hand, there is the outward looking

mind, preoccupied with the material world and dominated by unrighteous impulses. The first enables the self to be absorbed in the most sublime dharm that is embodied in God, whereas the second contrives illusion (maya) by virtue of which the material world is taken as really existent and distinct from the Supreme Spirit. The initial step of the spiritual wayfarer is to seek moral excellence so as to subdue unrighteous impulses. Subsequently, with the perception of and union with the immutable, eternal God, even the need for righteousness is done away with and the final outcome of the war between matter and spirit is revealed.

Looking at the armies on the battlefield of life we see our own families, and they have to be destroyed. The world is but an extension of attachments. Attachment to the family proves an obstacle in the primary stage of the worshipper's devotion to the desired goal. He is shaken when he discovers that he shall have to part with his near and dear ones and treat them as though they had never existed. He finds nothing but unpropitious harm in his act of destroying his own people. Like Arjun he, looks for an escape into prevailing traditions. Arjun says that family traditions are the Sanatan Dharm. Destruction of family and caste traditions by war is thus destruction of the eternal dharm itself. And when dharm is lost, women of the family grow unchaste and there is a sinful intermingling of classes which must drive both the family and its destroyers to hell for an indefinite time. With his limited knowledge and wisdom, Arjun is desperate to protect the family traditions which he regards as Sanatan Dharm. So he pleads with Krishn and wishes to be enlightened on why they (Krishn and he), men of sagacity, should be bent upon committing the heinous sin of destroying their family. According to his view of the issue at hand, even Krishn is about to become an accessory to the crime. Finally, he asserts adamantly that in order to save himself from the sin he shall not fight. Saying this he sinks

despairingly in the rear of the chariot. In other words, he turns his back on the precious enterprise of the perennial conflict that rages between matter and spirit, between godly and ungodly impulses, between forces that drag a man down to gross nature and forces that elevate and finally take the Soul to the Supreme God.

Commentators have called this first chapter of the Geeta “Arjun Vishad Yog.” “Vishad” is grief. Arjun is a symbol of tender, affectionate devotion. Grief is the motive as well as instrument of the devotee who is concerned about the preservation of the Sanatan Dharm. Such was the sorrow of Manu, whom Hindus believe to be the representative man and father of the human race. Goswami Tulsidas has said, ‘’Full of grief is my heart since I have only led my life without love of God.” A man sinks into grief because of irresolution. Arjun is apprehensive of varnsankar, of intermingling of classes, for such hybridization only leads to damnation. He also grieves because he fears for the safety of Sanatan Dharm. So the title “Sanshay Vishad Yog,” is appropriate for the chapter.

Thus concludes the First Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **“Sanshay Vishad Yog’’**, or **‘‘The Yog of Irresolution and Grief’’**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition of the First Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **‘‘Yatharth Geeta.’’**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 2

## Curiosity About Action

In the nature of a preface, Chapter 1 presents the seeker's doubts and confusions. The participants in the war include all of the Kaurav and Pandav, but Arjun alone is subject to misgivings. However, Arjun is the very embodiment of devotion as a wayfarer on the path of spiritual quest. It is his love for God that inspires him to get ready for the war between matter and spirit. The initial stage is thus of love, adoration. My revered teacher used to say, "Believe that adoration of the Supreme Spirit has commenced when, even while one is leading the life of a householder* *[*Garhastya : the second of the four stages in the traditional Hindu life, the other three being brahmcharya, vanprasth, and sanyas.]*, there are signs of weariness and tears, and sentiment so powerful that it chokes the throat.'' Manifold strands are entwined in love: of dharm, precept, restraint, pious association, and sentiment.

In the first stage of spiritual seeking, attachment to the family looms as an obstacle. At the outset everyone wishes to achieve the ultimate reality, but the worshipper is overtaken by despair when he realizes that after going a certain length of the way he will have to sever all his ties of attachment to the family. So he learns to be contented with whatever customs he had followed earlier. He even cites prevailing customs to justify his infatuation, just as Arjun does when he insists that family rites are Sanatan Dharm. The war will cause the extinction of the Sanatan Dharm itself and, along with that, destruction of families and

loss of civilized ways. Far from being an independent view of Arjun, his ideas only reflect some inherited creeds he had acquired earlier before approaching an accomplished teacher such as Krishn.

Mired in these traditions, men devise numerous religions, sects, groups small and large, and castes beyond reckoning. Some press the nose while others pierce their ears, while yet others lose their dharm because they are touched by someone, or because their food and drink are defiled. Is it just to blame the so called "untouchables" or non-Hindus for this state of affairs? By no means. The blame should rather be apportioned among those who propagate delusions in the name of dharm. As for us who listen to them, we are blind victims of what are but misguided customs, and so we, too, have to bear part of the blame.

In Mahatma Buddh's time there was a sect called Kesh-Kambal* *[*Literally translated, Kesh-Kambal is "blanket of hair".]*, the members of which regarded the practice of growing hair, so that it could be used like a blanket, as a standard of perfection. There have been some who thought it pious to live like cows, while others have lived and conducted themselves in the manner of dogs. But all these were only stupid customs that have nothing to do with awareness of God. There were schisms and foolish customs in the past, and they are with us even today. There were also divisions and stupid customs in Krishn's time, and Arjun is a victim of some of them. This is seen from his four arguments, namely that war destroys the eternal Sanatan Dharm and that it produces varnsankar, an unholy intermingling of disparate classes and ways of life. Obsequial offerings of diseased ancestors will cease and that we shall by being engaged in destroying our race, invite great curses on us. Thereupon, Yogeshwar Krishn speaks to him.

**संजय उवाच**

**तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्।**

**विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥१॥**

[ “Sanjay said, ‘To him (Arjun), whose eyes were brimming with tears of grief because he was overcome by pity, Madhusudan spoke thus.’ ” ]

To Arjun, his eyes filled with tears of sorrow and profound agitation, Madhusudan, the destroyer of arrogance, speaks:

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम्।**

**अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥२॥**

[ “The Lord said, ‘From what cause, O Arjun, does this unmanly (un-Arjun-like), heaven-barring, and shameful despair come over you at this perilous spot?’” ]

Krishn uses the term “visham” for the place where Arjun and he are at the time. Besides meaning “difficult” or “dangerous,” the word also means “unique” or “unequalled.” So Krishn really wishes to know that which has caused spiritual ignorance (agyan*) *[*Agyan: the ignorance which makes a man consider himself as distinct and separate from the Supreme Spirit and the material world as truly existing.]* in Arjun in this unusual, unparalleled setting. The setting is one, the like of which, can be found nowhere else in the entire world, because it is the sphere of spiritual striving towards an unworldly, celestial goal. In such a universal and undisputed setting, how has spiritual ignorance come over Arjun? Why does Krishn call Arjun’s views spiritual ignorance? Has Arjun not said categorically that it is his heartfelt wish to defend Sanatan Dharm ? Is it spiritual ignorance to be resolved, body and soul, to protect what Arjun believes to be the immutable, eternal dharm? According to Krishn it is so, for it has not been the practice of those who truly deserve to be called men. Neither does it provide access to heaven. It is also not conducive to glory. The one who keeps firmly to the path of righteousness is an Arya. In Hindu

scriptures, instead of referring to any race or stock, “Arya” denotes an exceptionally cultivated man who adheres scrupulously to dharm. If dying for one’s family were not an instance of ignorance, Krishn adds, sages would have practised it. Had family traditions been the ultimate reality, they would have been used as a ladder for climbing up to heaven and salvation. When Meera sang her songs of divine adoration, people declared her insane and her mother-in-law condemned her as a destroyer of the family. But no one today remembers the mother-in-law for shedding copious tears of concern about the well-being of her family and safety of its honour, while the whole world cherishes the memory of Meera. After all, how long can we remember the man who is concerned only about his family? Is it not evident then that customs which bring neither glory nor sublime happiness, and which have at no time been accepted by an Arya (a man of dharm), must be a kind of ignorance? Krishn says to Arjun:

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥३॥

[ “Don’t give in, O Parth, to unmanliness for it does not become you. So, O Parantap, stand up and drive away this disgraceful weakness of your heart.’’ ]

Krishn exhorts Arjun not to yield to impotence (klaibyam). Is Arjun impotent-lacking in virility? Are we virile men? An impotent man is one who is devoid of manliness. All of us, according to our wisdom, do what we believe to be manly. A peasant who sweats day and night in his fields, tries to prove his manliness by his labour. Some demonstrate their manliness in commerce and yet others try to prove that they are real men by abusing their powers. Ironically, however, even after this lifelong display of manliness, we depart but empty-handed at the end. Is it not obvious then that all this is not true manliness? True manliness is Self-

knowledge: awareness of the Soul and its divine origin. To cite yet another example from the Brihadaranyak Upanishad, Gargi tells Yagnvalkya that a man, though endowed with sexual prowess, is yet unmanly if he has no awareness of the embodied Soul. This Self is the real man (Purush), radiant and unmanifest. The endeavour to know this Self is true manliness (paurush). It is because of this that Krishn asks Arjun not to surrender to impotence. It is unworthy of him. He is a scorcher, a formidable vanquisher, of foes. So he ought to reject his grovelling feebleness and stand up for battle. He should give up his social attachments, for they are mere frailties. At this Arjun raises his third question:

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन।**

**इषुभिः प्रति योत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥४॥**

[ “Arjun said, ‘How, O Madhusudan, slayer of enemies, shall I shoot arrows in the battle against men like Bheeshm and Dron who deserve only my honour?’ ’’]

Arjun addresses Krishn as Madhusudan, destroyer of the demon of ego, and wants to know from him how he can fight with his grandsire Bheeshm and teacher Dron. Both are deserving of only reverence. Dual conduct, as we have seen, is Dronacharya: the conduct that arises from the feeling that God is separate from us and we are separate from him. But the consciousness of this duality is also the initial urge for spiritual accomplishment. This is Dronacharya’s excellence as a teacher. And then there is Bheeshm, the very image of delusion. So long as we stray from the right path and are under the sway of delusion, children, family, and kinsmen all appear as our own. The feeling that they belong to me-are mine, is the medium through which delusion works. The deluded

man regards them as worthy of worship and clings to them, for that one is father, the other one grandfather, and still another the teacher who has taught him. But after spiritual attainment there is neither teacher nor pupil, and the Self who has gained awareness of the essence, of the Supreme Spirit, is left all alone.

When the Self is absorbed in God, neither is the teacher a preceptor nor the disciple a receptacle. This is the state of the most exalted excellence. After assimilating the teacher's excellence the disciple shares it, and the distinction between the teacher and the pupil is obliterated. Krishn says, “Arjun, you shall dwell in me.” Arjun will become identical with Krishn, and the same is true of every sage who has known attainment. In such a state the teacher's existence merges into, and his magnificence flows spontaneously like a crystal stream through, the disciple's heart. But Arjun is yet far from that state and at present he exploits even the teacher's office as a shield to ward off participation in the war.

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्

श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके।

हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव

भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥५॥

[ “Even to live in this world as a mendicant begging for alms is better than killing teachers, for if I kill them all my joys and riches and desires in this world will be drenched in (their) blood.” ]

Arjun prefers the life of a beggar who lives on alms to killing his teachers. Rather than meaning “to beg for livelihood” (for the sustenance of the body), “begging” here denotes soliciting great men-through rendering even a half-hearted service to them-for the favour of propitious fortune. Food is the only God, after partaking of which the Soul's hunger

is assuaged for ever* *[*The idea is found at several places in the Upanishad. The Upanishad Taittiriya says, "Those who worship food as God (Brahm) gain all material objects. From food are risen all beings, which born, live and grow by food. All beings subsist on food, and, when they die, food partakes of them.]*. That he should, even though in small measures, continue to taste the manna of God's excellence by serving and soliciting a sage, without having to part with his family, is the craving behind Arjun's tearful appeal. Don't most of us do the same? It is our aspiration that we should gradually, at some point, achieve spiritual liberation without having to destroy the ties of familial love and attachment. But there is no such way for the seeker who has achieved a higher level of accomplishment than this and is strong enough to face the war raging on the battlefield of his heart. Soliciting and imploring like an almsman rather than doing something on one's own is like begging for food like a mendicant.

In the " Dhamnadayad Sutt" of Majjhim Nikaya, Mahatma Buddh has also declared the food obtained by begging inferior because it is like flesh received as alms.

How will he profit, Arjun asks, by killing his teachers? What else can the world reward him with for this crime but the unnatural enjoyment of bloodstained pleasures of sensual gratification and material prosperity? It appears from this that he perhaps believes that loving adoration of God will augment his worldly happiness. So his only achievement even after the most strenuous struggle, he believes, can be nothing more than enjoyment of riches which sustain the body and sensual pleasures. He goes on to make yet another reasoning:

**न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो**

**यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः।**

**यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-**

स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥६॥

[ “I hardly know which is better, their (the Kaurav’s) conquering us or our conquering them - even Dhritrashtr ’s sons -who are our enemies, and yet after killing whom we may not wish to live.” ]

Even possession of the hoped-for delights is not assured. Arjun is at his wit’s end as to what course of action can bring him glory, for whatever he has said till now has been proved to be only ignorance. He does not also know whether he will rout the Kaurav or they will rout him. Dhritrashtr’s sons, after slaying whom he should not desire to live, are arrayed against him. What shall he live for if his feelings of attachment represented here by his kinsmen, all of them progeny of Dhritrashtr’s ignorance, are destroyed? At the same time, however, it occurs to Arjun that what he has said now may be also false. So he turns to Krishn again:

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥७॥

[ “With my mind swamped with feeble pity and confusion regarding duty, I entreat you to instruct me as to what is definitely conducive to my glory, for I am your disciple and have taken refuge in you.” ]

With his heart enfeebled by pity and his mind clouded with infatuation in regard to dharm, Arjun begs Krishn to tell him the means that will definitely be the most conducive to what is supremely propitious for him. But why should Krishn do this? According to Arjun, it is Krishn’s duty to show him the right path because he (Arjun) is a disciple who has found shelter under him.

Furthermore, he needs not only instruction but also support when he stumbles. He is like the man requesting a helper to place the load on his back, help him in securing it there, and also to come along with him, for who will put back the load in place again if it slips down. Such is Arjun's abject submission to Krishn.

At this point Arjun's surrender is complete. Until now he had thought himself an equal of Krishn in merit and, in fact, even superior to him in certain skills. But now he really puts himself at the mercy of his charioteer. An accomplished teacher dwells in his disciple's heart and is always by his side until the goal is reached. If he is not there by his side, the pupil may falter in his quest. Like the guardians of a maiden who protect her till her marriage, an accomplished teacher acts as a charioteer who skilfully manoeuvers his disciple's Soul safely across the perilous valleys of nature. Arjun now makes one more submission:

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्

यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम्।

अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं

राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥८॥

[ "I do not see that obtaining an undisputed and profitable dominion over the whole earth or, (for that matter) even lordship over the gods, can cure the grief that is wearing out my senses." ]

Arjun cannot believe that even a secure and lucrative realm extending across the whole earth or even an Indr-like lordship over the gods of heaven can help him get rid of the sorrow that is withering his senses. If his grief is unabated, what shall he do with all these acquisitions? He begs to be excused from fighting in the war if these are to be his only rewards in return. He is utterly disheartened and he does not know what to say after this.

संजय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तप।

न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥९॥

[ "Sanjay said,' After having thus spoken to Hrishikesh, Arjun, the conqueror of sleep and destroyer of foes, told Govind* *[*One of the several names of Krishn, meaning "a keeper of cows" or "a herdsman."]* (Krishn) that he would not fight, and then he fell silent.'" ]

So far Arjun's attitude has been determined by the Puran* *[*Name of certain ancient sacred compositions, eighteen in number and believed to have been written by Vyas. These works contain the whole body of Hindu mythology.]*, which contain ordinances for ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites as well as the enjoyment of benefits arising from a due performance thereof. In these works, heaven is the ultimate goal: but Krishn later enlightens Arjun that this line of thought is mistaken.

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥१०॥

[ "Hrishikesh then, O Bharat (Dhritrashtr), with a smile as it appeared, spoke thus to him (Arjun) who sat mournfully between the two armies." ]

Krishn, knower of secrets of the innermost heart (Hrishikesh), speaks smilingly to the grieving Arjun:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे।

गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥११॥

[ "The Lord said, Although sorrowing over those who ought not to be grieved for, you yet speak wise words; but the discriminating mourn over neither the living nor those who are dead.'" ]

Krishn tells Arjun that while he grieves for those who are unworthy of such grief, he also speaks words of wisdom, but men of discernment mourn neither for those whose souls have departed nor for the ones who are living. They do not grieve for the living because they shall also die. That means that Arjun only talks like a wise man; he does not know the reality, since-

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥१२॥

[ "It is not that either you or I, or all these kings, did not exist in the past, nor is it that our being will come to an end in the future.'' ]

It is not, Krishn explains, that he, the accomplished teacher, or Arjun-the devoted pupil, or all these kings with the vanity that is characteristic of rulers of men, did not exist at any time in the ages to come. The accomplished teacher is for ever, and so are affectionate disciples as well as rulers who symbolize the perversions of passion and moral blindness. Here, besides throwing light on the permanence of Yog in general, Yogeshwar Krishn has particularly stressed its existence in the future. Explaining why the dead should not be mourned over, he says:

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥१३॥

[ "Since the embodied Spirit passes through infancy, youth, and old age in the body, and then transmigrates into another body, men with steadfast minds do not grieve over his passing away.'' ]

As the embodied soul waxes from childhood to youth, then wanes to old age, and assumes one new body after another, wise men are not prey to infatuation. At some time a man is a boy and then he

grows into a young man. But does he die by this? Then he grows old. The Self is ever the same; only the condition of the physical body in which he resides goes on changing. There is no crack in him when he changes over to a new body. This change from one physical body to another will continue until the Soul is united with the Supreme Spirit who alone is beyond all change.

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥१४॥

[ "There are sensations of heat and cold, and of pain and pleasure, O son of Kunti, as senses meet their objects. Bear them patiently, O Bharat, because they have a beginning and an end, and are transient.'' ]

The contact of senses and their objects, which generates pleasure and pain, and feelings of cold and warmth, is occasional and momentary. Arjun should, therefore, abandon them. But instead of that, he is shaken by the mere thought of pleasures that are derived from the union of senses and their objects. The family for the sake of whom we yearn for pleasures and the teacher whom we revere both represent the attachment of senses. But the causes of this attachment are momentary, false and perishable. Neither shall our senses always meet with objects they enjoy, nor shall they always be capable of enjoyment. So Arjun is counselled to give up sensual pleasures and learn to withstand the demands of his senses. But why is Arjun counselled thus? Is it a Himalayan war in which he has to endure cold? Or is it a desert war in which he has to suffer heat? As knowledgeable people say, the actual "Kurukshetr" has a moderate climate. During the mere eighteen days that is the total duration of the Mahabharat war, is it possible that seasons will change: that winter and summer will come and go? The truth is that endurance of cold and heat, of happiness and sorrow, of honour and

dishonour, depends upon the seeker's spiritual endeavour. The Geeta is, as we have seen more than once, an externalization of the inner conflict that rages within the mind. This war is the war between the gross physical body and the Self which is aware of his identity with God. It is a conflict in which ultimately even the forces of divinity grow inert after they have subdued unrighteous impulses and enabled the Self to become one with God. When there remains no impiety, what else is there for pious impulses to fight? The Geeta is thus a picturization of inner conflict that rages within the mind. What advantages, however, will the recommended sacrifice of senses and their pleasures bring? What is gained by this? Krishn speaks of this:

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥१५॥

[ “So, O the noblest of men (Arjun), one who is possessed of equanimity in pain and pleasure, and firm, and untormented by these (feelings produced by the meeting of senses with their objects), deserves (to taste) the nectar of immortality.’’ ]

The steadfast man, who regards sorrow and happiness with equipoise and is not troubled by his senses and their association with objects, is worthy of the state of immortality that realization of the Supreme Spirit brings. Here Krishn refers to an attainment, namely amrit, literally the drink of immortality. Arjun had thought that in return for the war he would be rewarded with either a heavenly abode or the authority to rule over the earth. But now Krishn tells him that his prize will be amrit rather than the pleasures of heaven or earthly power. What is this amrit?

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥१६॥

[ ‘‘The unreal has no being and the real has no non-being; and the truth about both has also been seen by men who know the reality.’’ ]

The unreal has no existence; it has no being and so bringing it to an end is out of the question. On the other hand, there is no absence of the real in all time-past, present or future. Arjun then asks Krishn whether he is saying this as an incarnation of God. Krishn’s reply to this is that the distinction between the real and the unreal has also been revealed to sages who have realized the true nature of the human Soul as identical with the Supreme Spirit pervading the universe. That is to say that Krishn of the Geeta is a seer who has gained an insight into reality. What, after all, are true and false, real and unreal?

**अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।**

**विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥१७॥**

[ “Know that since the Spirit which pervades the universe is imperishable and immutable, no one can effect his destruction.” ]

That which spreads through and is present in every atom of the universe is indestructible. No one is capable of destroying the imperishable principle. But what is the name of this deathless amrit? Who is he?

**अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः।**

**अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥१८॥**

[ “Fight, O Bharat (Arjun), because while the bodies which clothe the Soul are said to come to an end, the embodied Spirit itself is for ever, indestructible, and boundless.’’ ]

Arjun is exhorted to get up and fight because all these physical bodies that embody the indwelling, boundless, and eternal Spirit are said to be ephemeral. This Spirit, the Self, is imperishable, and it cannot be

destroyed at any time. The Self is real, whereas the physical body is subject to death, and so unreal and nonexistent at all times.

Krishn's injunction to Arjun is, "Fight because the body is mortal." But it is not evident from the exhortation whether Arjun is required to kill only the Kaurav. Aren't the men on the side of Pandav, too, "bodies"? Are the Pandav immortal? If physical bodies are mortal, who is Krishn there to defend? Is Arjun not a body, too? Is Krishn there to defend that body which is unreal, without being, and unceasing? If it is so, may it not be assumed that he too is ignorant and lacking in discrimination, the power that distinguishes between the visible world and the invisible Spirit. Doesn't he himself say later that the man who thinks of and toils only for the physical body (3.13) is ignorant and wanting in discernment? Such a wretched man lives in vain. There is also another problem. Who really is this Arjun?

As it was said in Chapter I, Arjun is an embodiment of affectionate devotion. Like a faithful charioteer, the revered God is always with his devotee. Like a friend, he guides him and shows him the right way. We are not a physical body. The body is a mere garment, a dwelling for the Soul to live in. The one who lives in it is the affectionate Self. The physical body was sometime back called "unceasing." Elemental wars and slaughter do not destroy the body. When one body is forsaken, the Soul just assumes another body. It is with reference to this that Krishn has said that there is change from one body to another just as a man grows from childhood to youth, and then to old age. If you hack a body to pieces, the Soul just puts on another body like a new apparel.

The real base of the body is constituted by sanskar, the merits-the influences and impressions-earned during a previous existence. And sanskar rests upon the mind. Perfect subjugation of the mind, so that it can be changeless, firm, and constant, and the dissolution of the last

sanskar, are all different aspects of the same process. The disintegration of the last crust of this sanskar marks the end of physical existence. To bring about this dissolution we have to undertake aradhana, worship and adoration, of the desired God. Krishn has named it action (karm) or the Way of Selfless Action (Nishkam Karm Yog). In the Geeta, he has from time to time urged Arjun to wage war, but in the entire poem there is not one verse that supports the idea that this war is a physical war or in any way related to the idea of actual bloodshed. Evidently this war is the war between the opposed impulses of righteousness and unrighteousness, the forces of piety and those of impiety, that is fought within man's Soul- the seat of all thought and feeling.

**य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम्।**

**उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥१९॥**

[ "They are both ignorant, he who believes that the Self slays and he who thinks that he is slain, for he neither slays nor he is slain*.'' *[*R. W. Emerson, the American transcendalist poet-philosopher, has rendered the idea in his poem entitled "Brahma" (1857) thus :*

*If the red slayer thinks he slays.*
*Or if the slain think he is slain,*
*They know not well the subtle ways*
*I keep, and pass, and turn again].* ]

He who regards the Self as the slayer and he who regards him as the slain are both unaware of his real nature, for he neither kills nor can he be killed. The same point is stressed again:

**न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-**

**न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।**

**अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो**

**न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥२०॥**

[ “Neither (ever) born nor dying, neither at any time coming into being nor ceasing to be, the Self is birthless, perpetual, unchanging, and timeless, and he is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.’’ ]

The Self, the God within soul, is neither at any time born nor does he at any time die, for what he undergoes in the name of death is a mere change of apparel. He cannot also be anything other than Self, because he is birthless, permanent, eternal, and primeval. Disintegration, death, of the body does not annihilate the self. The Self alone is real, timeless, unchanging, and eternal. Who are you? A follower of the eternal Dharm? What is for ever?

The Self. So you are a follower, a disciple, of the Self. The Self and Brahm (God) are synonymous, And who are you ? A worshipper of the eternal Dharm. What is immutable? The Self, of course. That is to say that you and I all are adorers of the Self? But if we are not familiar with the spiritual path to the eternal truth, the way of following the dictates of the Self until he is one with the Supreme Spirit, we have nothing that is worthy of being described as changeless and everlasting. We are on trial for the final absolution and in close proximity to God if we pine for him, but we cannot be deemed as having been admitted as long as we are credulous enough to accept blindly one wrong convention or the other masquerading as Sanatan Dharm.

Be it in India or any other country, the Soul in all is identical. So, if anywhere on the earth there is a man who is aware of the true nature of Self and his ultimate goal, and who is eager to take to the way which will eventually lead his Self to the Supreme Spirit, be he a professed Christian, Muslim, Jew, or anything else, he undoubtedly also belongs to the fold of Sanatan Dharm-the changeless and eternal.

**वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम्।**

**कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥२१॥**

[ “How can he, O Parth, who is conscious of the Soul within as imperishable, permanent, birthless, and immutable, kill or move another to kill?” ]

Arjun is addressed as Parth, for he has made a chariot of the earth-made body and is preparing to take a perfect aim at the Supreme Spirit. The man who knows that the embodied Soul is indestructible, permanent, beyond birth, and unmanifest-how can he make others slay or be a slayer himself? Destruction of what is indestructible is impossible. And, being beyond birth, the Self is also never born. So why grieve for the body? This idea is further elaborated in the following verse:

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥२२॥

[ “Like a man who puts on new garments after discarding his worn out clothes, the embodied Self, also, casts off tattered bodies and transmigrates into other bodies that are new.’’ ]

The Soul rejects bodies that have been ravaged by old age or some other disease and dresses himself in new apparel just as a man throws away old, torn clothes and puts on new clothes. But if new clothing is needed only when the fabric of old clothes is weakened, why do young children die?

These “garments” have yet to grow and evolve. It was said a little earlier that the body rests on sanskar, the impressions from action attained in the course of a previous existence. When the store of sanskar is depleted, the Self discards the body. If the sanskar is of two days’ duration only, the body will be on the brink of death on the second day itself. Beyond sanskar there is not even a single breath of life; sanskar is

the body and the Self assumes a new body according to his sanskar. According to the Chandogya Upanishad," "A man is primarily his will. As is his will in this life, so does he become when he departs from it." It is the firmness of his will in one life that determines what a man will be in the next. Man is thus born in bodies that are shaped by his own will. So death is a mere physical change: the Self does not die. Krishn again emphasizes the same imperishability of the Soul.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥२३॥

[ ''This Self is neither pierced by weapons, nor burnt by fire, nor made damp by water, nor dried up by wind.'' ]

Weapons cannot cleave the Self. Fire cannot singe him. He cannot also be drenched by water, nor withered by wind.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥२४॥

[ ''The Self, which cannot be pierced or burnt or made wet or faded, is uninterrupted, all-pervasive, constant, immovable, and eternal.'' ]

The Self cannot be cut or pierced through; he cannot be burnt; and he cannot be soaked. Even the whole firmament cannot contain him within its expanse. The Self is beyond doubt, ever-fresh, omnipresent, immovable, constant, and everlasting.

Arjun has pronounced family traditions to be eternal. So, according to him, the war will destroy Sanatan Dharm itself. But Krishn finds it an example of ignorance and points out that the Self alone is eternal. If we do not know the means by which we can realize our Self and his goal, we have no inkling of Sanatan Dharm. India has paid a heavy price for this ignorance.

The total number of Muslim invaders who came to this country in the Middle Ages was approximately twelve thousand. Today they have multiplied to more than 280 million. Twelve thousand could reasonably have grown to a few hundred thousand to 10 million at the most. They could not have grown to more than this. But their number now is more than a 280 million. Now, who are the majority of them but Hindus, our own coreligionists and brothers, who were lost to the fold because of our absurd taboos of food and touch? In fact, their conversion is a proof that we have by and large lost touch with Sanatan Dharm. We are so befogged by silly customs that we have lost the capacity to realize that food and touch cannot destroy Sanatan Dharm. The truth is that no object of the material world can touch this universal spiritual principle. What has made us lose millions of our brothers is not dharm but only some stupid conventions. And the same misconceptions must be held responsible for our worsening communal situation, partition of India, and even for the serious threats to our national unity and integrity that we facing today. There are innumerable examples of how we have suffered because of our mindless customs that have nothing to do with dharm.

There used to live fifty-to-sixty cultured Kshatriya families in a village in Hamirpur district. But today they are all Muslims. Were they proselytized, we may ask, under threat of swords and guns? Not at all. What really happened was this – One night a couple of mullahs hid themselves near the only well of the village, knowing that the first bather to come to the well in the morning would be the karmkandi* *[*An expert of the section of the Ved which is related to ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites.]* Brahmin of the village. When he came, the mullahs caught hold of him and gagged him. Then before his eyes they drew some water out of the well, drank some of it, and poured the rest back into the well; they also dropped a piece of partly-eaten bread into it. The Brahmin looked on

dumbfounded at all this, but he was helpless. Finally, the mullahs left along with the Brahmin, whom they locked up in their house.

The next day when the mullahs requested him with folded hands to eat something, the Brahmin flared up and said, “you are a Yavan* *[*Originally meaning an Ionian (Greek), but now used for any alien or non-Hindu.]* and I am a Brahmin. How on earth can I eat your food?” The mullahs replied, “Revered sir, we sorely need wise men like you.’’ Thereafter the Brahmin was set free.

He went back to his village and saw his people using the well as before. So as a penance he went on fast. When people asked him for the reason, he told them how some Muslims had climbed upon the low wall around the well, and how they had also poured defiled water and cast a piece of partly-eaten bread into it. Stunned, the people of the village asked, “What shall we do now?” The Brahmin replied, “Nothing, because we have lost our dharm.”

People were usually not educated in those days. No one knows how long since women and the, so called “untouchables” had been deprived of the right to learn. The Vaishya were convinced that making money was their only dharm. The Kshatriya were absorbed in the laudatory songs of minstrels. No sooner did their master’s sword flash than there was lightning and the throne of Delhi began to shake. If honour came from muscle power, the Kshatriya thought, why should they study and learn? What had they, weilders of arms, to do with dharm. Dharm had thus turned into a monopoly of the Brahmin. Not only were they framers of religious laws as well as their interpreters, they had also appointed themselves the final arbiters of right and wrong-of the true and the false. Such was the country’s moral and spiritual degradation in the medieval times. As against this, in ancient India, not only the Brahmin but members of all classes and even women had been entitled to study of the Ved. Sages of different schools had then composed the Vedic

verses and participated in spiritual discourses and debates. Ancient Indian rulers are known to have severely punished those who propagated pretence and affectation in the name of dharm. They had also paid due respect to the scriptures of religions other than their own.

But in medieval India, ignorant of the spirit of Sanatan Dharm, the Kshatriya of the village of our sad story slunk one after the other into a corner like frightened sheep, shuddering with the unbearable agony of the thought that they had lost their dharm. Some of them even committed suicide. But, of course, all of them could not be expected to kill themselves. Men of staunch faith, they yet looked for an alternative because of their mistaken belief. Even today the Muslims of the Hamirpur village solemnize their weddings like Hindus. Only at the end of the ceremony a mullah is brought in to perform the nikah ceremony. All of them were once faithful Hindus and all of them are now faithful Muslims.

The catastrophe, as we have seen, was brought about by nothing more then the prevailing Hindu belief that their water would be defiled if it was touched by a Muslim. The misguided villagers were convinced that they had lost their dharm by using defiled water. So that is what dharm had been reduced to in medieval India. It had turned into something like the plant whose leaves shrink and droop at being touched. We call this plant Lajwanti (the shy one). Its leaves contract if you just touch them, but they expand and firm up when you remove your hand. What a great pity that a mere plant revives as soon as the hand that touched it moves away, but the dharm of the Hamirpur villagers withered so irreversibly that it could never revive again. Their dharm was dead, and also gone for them forever were their Ram, their Krishn, and their God. The powers that they had taken as for ever now ceased to exist for them. That is how the ignorant villagers looked at the question. The truth is, however, that the power that was dead was only certain

stupid customs which people had taken for dharm out of their spiritual ignorance. Dharm protects us and is, therefore, stronger than us. But whereas even the mortal body needs some kind of a weapon to be killed, the peculiar ‘‘dharm’’ of the gullible Hindu was destroyed by a mere touch. What kind of dharm was it, we wonder, for it is man-made customs which die, nor that which is eternal and immutable?

That which is eternal is so strong and impregnable that arms cannot pierce it, fire cannot burn it, and water cannot wet it. Nothing that belongs to the material world can touch it, let alone food and drink.

Some such misguided traditions had prevailed at the time of Arjun, too, and he was obviously one of their victims. So he tearfully whines to Krishn about the eternal nature of family rites and customs. The war, he says, will destroy Sanatan Dharm, and when this is lost, all the members of the family are bound to end up in hell. It is evident that what Arjun is talking about is some customary beliefs of his time. That is why the spiritually adept Krishn refutes him and points out that the Self alone is perpetual. If we do not know the way to this embodied God, we are yet uninitiated into the spirit of Sanatan Dharm. Knowing that this immutable, eternal Self pervades all, what should we look for? This is what Krishn speaks of now:

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥२५॥

[ “Knowing that the Self is unmanifest, a non-object to the senses, incomprehensible because he is a non-object to the mind, and changeless, (O Arjun), it does not befit you to grieve (over him).’’ ]

The Soul is unmanifest and not an object of the senses. He cannot be grasped by the senses. He is present even when there is the association of senses with their objects, but he cannot be comprehended. He is beyond thought. He is eternal and he is present

even when the mind and its volitions persist, but he is beyond perception, enjoyment, and access. So the mind has to be restrained. Krishn has told Arjun that the unreal has no existence and neither is the real ever nonexistent. The Self is that reality. It is the Self that is changeless, constant, eternal, and unmanifest. They who know the essence have found the Self adorned with these traits. Not linguists nor the affluent, but only seers have known the unique character of the Self. In Chapter 18, Krishn will affirm that the Supreme Spirit alone is real. By restraining the mind, the worshipper sees him and becomes one with him. At the moment of attainment he realizes God and, the very next moment after this, he finds his own soul adorned with Godlike traits. He sees then that this Self is true, eternal, and perfect. This Self is beyond the reach of thought. Free from any deviation, it is called immutable. Krishn then uses simple logic to demonstrate the contradictions between Arjun's thoughts.

**अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम्।**

**तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२६॥**

[ "You ought not to grieve, O the mighty-armed, even if you think of him (the Self) as ever-born and ever-dying.'' ]

Arjun ought not to mourn even if he regards the Self as constantly born and constantly dying.

**जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।**

**तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२७॥**

[ "Since this also proves the certain death of what is born and the certain birth of what dies, you ought not to grieve over the inevitable.'' ]

Even the assumption that the Self is ever-born and ever-dying only goes to establish that the born must die and the dead must be born.

So Arjun ought not to grieve over what must be, for sorrowing over something which is inevitable is inviting yet another sorrow.

**अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत।**

**अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥२८॥**

[ "Why grieve over the matter, O Bharat (Arjun), when all beings, disembodied before birth and disembodied after death, appear to possess a body only between the two events?" ]

All beings are body-less before birth and also body-less after death. They can be seen neither before birth nor after death. It is only between birth and death that they assume the form of a body. So why grieve uselessly over this change? But who can see this Self? Krishn answers the question thus:

**आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-**

**माश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः।**

**आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति**

**श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥२९॥**

[ "Only a seer views the Soul as a marvel, another one describes him as a marvel, and yet another one hears him as marvel. While there are some who hear him and yet know him not.'' ]

Krishn has said before that only enlightened, realized, sages have viewed the Self. Now he elaborates the rareness of this vision. Only a rare sage sees the Self-views him directly rather than just hear of him. Similarly, another rare sage speaks of his substance. Only he who has seen the Self can describe him. Yet another rare seeker hears him as a wonder, for even hearing the voice of the Self is not possible for all because it is meant only for men of high spiritual attainment. There are

people who hear the Self and yet know him not, because they are incapable of treading the spiritual path. A man may Listen to, countless words of wisdom, split hairs, and be eager to acquire the highest wisdom. But his attachments are possessed of irresistible might and after only a short while he finds himself reversed to worldly business.

So at last Krishn gives his verdict:

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत।

तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥३०॥

[ "Since the Self dwelling in all bodies is unslayable, O Bharat, it does not befit you to grieve for living beings.'' ]

Arjun ought not to mourn for living beings because the Self, in whatever body he is, can be neither slain nor pierced through. Duly expounded and treated with authority, the point at issue that "the Self is eternal" is concluded here.

But there arises another question at this point. How to realize and fulfil the Self? In the whole of the Geeta only two ways are suggested for this, first "the Way of Selfless Action" (Nishkam Karm Yog) and, secondly, "the Way of Discernment" (Gyan Yog). The required action for both the ways is the same. Stressing the necessity of this action, Yogeshwar Krishn says:

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥३१॥

[ "In view of your own dharm, too, it is unworthy of you to fear, for there is nothing more propitious for a Kshatriya than a righteous war.'' ]

It does not befit Arjun to be hesitant even if he just keeps his dharm in view, because there is no greater good for a Kshatriya than a war of piety. It has been repeatedly said that "the Self is immutable," that "the Self is eternal," and that "the Self is the only real dharm." Now what

is this dharm of the Self (swadharm)? The Self is the only dharm, although the capacity to engage in this dharm varies from individual to individual. This ability arising from one's disposition has been named swadharm or the inherent dharm.

Ancient sages divided the travellers on the eternal path of the Self into four classes, Shudr, Vaishya, Kshatriy, and Brahmin, according to their innate abilities. In the primary stage of accomplishment every seeker is a Shudr, meaning one who is deficient in knowledge. He spends hours on worship and adoration of God, and yet fails to render even ten minutes of his time truly beneficial to his spiritual quest. He is unable to cut through the illusory facade of the material world. Sitting devoutly at the feet of a realized Sage, an accomplished teacher, at this stage helps in the cultivation of virtues in his nature. With this he is promoted to the level of a seeker of the Vaishya class. Gradually realizing that accomplishments of the Self are the only true accomplishments, he becomes adept in seizing and protecting his senses. Passion and wrath are fatal to the senses, whereas discrimination and renunciation protect them, but they are by themselves incapable of annihilating seeds of the material world. Gradually, then, as the worshipper progresses further, his heart and mind grow strong enough to carve their way through the three properties of nature. This is the inborn quality of a Kshatriy. At this point the worshipper acquires the ability to destroy the world of nature and its perversions. So this is the point of commencement of the war. By further refinement after this, the worshipper is slowly elevated to the category of a Brahmin. Some of the virtues that now grow in the seeker are control of the mind and senses, incessant contemplation, simplicity, perception, and knowledge. By slowly perfecting these qualities, then, he ultimately attains to God, and at this stage he ceases to be even a Brahmin.

At a sacrifice performed by Janak, King of Videh, answering questions by Ushast, Kahol, Aruni, Uddalak, and Gargi, Maharshi Yagnvalkya said that a Brahmin is one who has achieved direct realization of the Self. It is the Self, dwelling in this world and the higher world, and in all beings, that governs all from within. The Self is the inner ruler. The sun, the moon, the earth, water, ether, fire, stars, space, the sky, and every moment of time-are under the authority of this Self. This embodied Self, knowing and controlling the mind and the heart from within, is immortal. He is the imperishable reality (Akshar) and anything that is not Self is destroyed. In this world, he who offers oblations, performs sacrifices, practises austerities, even though for many thousands of years but without an awareness of this reality, gains little: all his offerings and exercises are perishable. He who departs from this life without knowing the imperishable is like a wretched miser. But he who dies with knowledge of reality is a Brahmin*. *[*The Upanishad Brihadaranyak.]*

Arjun is Kshatriy worshipper. According to Krishn there is no more beneficial way for such a seeker than war. The question is: what is meant by the term Kshatriy? Usually, in social usage, it is taken as one of the terms such as Brahmin, Vaishya, and Shudr, which are denominations of “castes” determined by birth. These four constitute what are known as the fourfold varn. But that such was not the original intent behind the provision is evident from what the Geeta has to say about the inherent disposition of the Kshatriy. Here Krishn just demonstrates the duty of a Kshatriy. The problem, namely of what varn is and how a man of inferior varn can by his conduct gradually elevate himself to a higher class, is repeatedly taken up and resolved at the very end of the sacred composition.

Krishn says that he has created the four varn. Did he in doing so divide men into four classes? He himself says that it was not so: he has

only divided action into four categories according to the innate property. So we have to see what that action is which has thus been divided. Properties are variable. The correct mode of worship can elevate one from the lowest property of ignorance to that of passion and moral blindness, and hence to virtue, or the quality of goodness. So through gradual cultivation of the inherent property, any individual can evolve himself into a Brahmin. He is, then, possessed of all the qualities that are essential to the attainment of and union with the Supreme Spirit.

Krishn lays down that even if the inherent ability, by which a man participates in this dharm, is of the unmeritorious and ignorant Shudr level, it is beneficial in the highest sense, because it is the starting point from where he can set out on the path of Self-cultivation. However, the worshipper is destroyed if he imitates the manner of higher classes. Arjun is a worshipper of the Kshatriy class. That is why Krishn enjoins him to remember his ability to wage war, because through it he will know that irresolution and grief are unworthy of him. There is no better task than this for a Kshatriy. Clarifying the point further, the Yogeshwar says:

**यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम्।**

**सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥३२॥**

[ “Blessed indeed, O Parth, are the Kshatriy who, without seeking, come upon such a war which is like an open door to heaven.” ]

The perfect marksman Arjun has made a chariot of the temporal body itself. Only the most fortunate among Kshatriy get an opportunity to fight in a war of righteousness that provides fighters with an open gateway to heaven. The worshipper of the Kshatriy class is strong enough to subdue all the three properties of matter. The door to heaven is open to him because he has stored an abundance of divine riches in his heart. He is qualified for the enjoyment of celestial existence. This is the open way to heaven. Only the fortunate among the Kshatriy, the

ones who have the capacity to wage war, are able to know the significance of the incessant struggle that goes on between matter and spirit.

There are wars in the world. People assemble at a place and fight. But even victors in these wars fail to secure a lasting victory. These wars are, in fact, only acts of getting satisfaction by deliberately inflicting injury for injuries inflicted-mere acts of vengeance. The more a man suppresses others, the more he is eventually suppressed himself. What kind of victory is this in which there is only sense-withering grief? And at the end the body is also destroyed. The really beneficial war is the conflict between matter and spirit, for a single conquest in this war results in domination of matter by the Self. This is a conquest after which there is no possibility of defeat.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३३॥

[ "And if you do not engage in this righteous war, you will lose the dharm of your Self and glory, and be guilty of sin.'' ]

If Arjun does not fight in this war of matter and spirit, which will afford him access to the Supreme Spirit-to the immutable, eternal dharm, he will be deprived of his inherent capacity for action and struggle, and wallow in the mire of repeated birth and death, and of disgrace. Krishn then clarifies the nature of this disgrace:

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम्।

सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥३४॥

[ "And all will for ever speak of your disgrace and such disgrace is worse than death itself for a man of honour.'' ]

People will long speak ill of Arjun's unmanliness. Even today sages like Vishwamitr, Parasher, Nimi, and Shringi are remembered

chiefly for their transgressions of the path of righteousness. So worshippers reflect on their dharm. They think about what others will say of them. Such thought is helpful in the process of spiritual seeking. It provides the urge for persevering with the quest for the ultimate reality. It also provides support over a certain length of the spiritual way. Infamy is even worse than death for honourable men.

**भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः।**

**येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥३५॥**

[ “Even the great warriors who have a high regard for you will then scorn you for having turned your back upon the war out of fear.’’ ]

The mighty warriors, in whose esteem Arjun will then fall from honour to dishonour, will believe that he had retreated from the war due to cowardice. Who are these other great warriors? They, too, are seekers who make their way strenuously along the path of spiritual realization. The other formidable warriors who oppose them are, on the contrary, desire for sensual pleasure, anger, greed, and attachment, that drag the worshipper with equal tenacity towards ignorance. Arjun will be disgraced in the eyes of the very people who now hold him in high esteem as a worthy seeker. Apart from this,

**अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः।**

**निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥३६॥**

[ “There can be nothing more painful for you than the disparaging and improper words your adversaries will speak against your valour.’’ ]

His enemies will malign Arjun and utter words about him that should not be spoken. A single blemish is sufficient to bring upon one a shower of slander and abuse from all directions. Even words, improper for speech, are spoken. Can there be a greater grief than being an object of such calumny? So Krishn tells Arjun:

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम्।

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥३७॥

[“Rise up with determination for the war because if you die in it you will attain to heaven and, if you win, you will attain to the most exalted glory.’’]

If Arjun loses his life in the war, he will go to heaven and be with Swar - the indestructible God. The impulses that guide one towards the world of matter that is external to the Self will be retarded. And his heart will then overflow with the divine qualities that enable one to realize the Supreme Spirit. In case he wins, however, he will attain to the state of redemption, the noblest accomplishment. So Krishn exhorts Arjun to get up determinedly and prepare for war.

Usually by the verse under examination it is understood that if Arjun dies in the war, he will be privileged to live in heaven, but that if he is victorious he will be rewarded with enjoyment of worldly pleasures. But we cannot but remember that Arjun has told Krishn that, in neither a realm made up of all the three worlds, nor even in an Indr-like lordship over gods, can he see the means that can remedy the grief that is wearing out his senses. If he is to achieve only all this, he has said, he will not fight at any cost. Nevertheless, Krishn exhorts him to fight. What greater reward than domination over the earth in case of victory and celestial pleasures in case of defeat does Krishn promise Arjun in order to make him fight? Arjun is, in fact, a disciple aiming at the truth and excellence that lie beyond earthly and heavenly joys. Knowing this, Krishn, the accomplished teacher, tells him that even if the time allotted to his body expires in the course of the war and he does not succeed in reaching his goal, imbued with divine riches he will gain an existence in Swar, the changeless and eternal. If, on the other hand, he succeeds in the struggle while his temporal body is still alive, he will achieve the

sublimity of God and thus attain to the state of the highest glory. He will thus be a winner both ways: if he conquers he will attain to the highest state; and if he loses he will find an abode in heaven and enjoy godly pleasures. There is profit in victory and there is profit too in defeat. The point is reiterated:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३८॥

[ "You will not incur sin if you get up and fight the war, treating victory and defeat, profit and loss, and happiness and sorrow, alike.'' ]

Krishn counsels Arjun to regard with an equal mind happiness and sorrow, profit and loss, and victory and defeat, and prepare for war. If he participates in the war, he will not be guilty of sin. He will gain the state of sublimity, the most precious possession that is possible for a man to have, in case of success, and achievement of godhood even in case of defeat. So Arjun should deliberate well on his gains and losses, and prepare for war.

एषा तेऽभिहिता साङ्ख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि।।३९।।

[ "This knowledge which I have imparted to you, O Parth, is related to Gyan Yog, the Way of knowledge, and now you should listen to me on Karm Yog, the Way of Selfless Action, with which you can successfully sever the fetters of action as well as its consequence (karm).'' ]

Krishn tells Arjun that the knowledge, he has spoken of, is related to the Way of Knowledge. What knowledge is it except that Arjun should fight? The substance of the Way of Discrimination or Knowledge is only that if we fight according to our disposition after a careful appraisal of our capacity as well as of profit and loss, we shall attain to the state of ultimate bliss if we win, and to heavenly, godlike existence

even if we are vanquished. There is gain in both cases. If we do not act, others will speak disparagingly of us and look upon us as having retreated like cowards, and we shall be disgraced. So to forge ahead on the path of action with a careful understanding of one's innate nature is itself the Way of Knowledge or Discernment.

We usually come across the misconception that no war needs to be fought on the Path of Knowledge. It is said that knowledge involves no action. We think in our vanity: "I am pure." "I am enlightened."- "I am a part of God himself." Accepting it as an axiom that excellence be gets excellence, we sit idly. But this is not the Way of Knowledge according to Yogeshwar Krishn. The "action" which has to be performed in following the Way of Knowledge is similar to that which has to be undertaken for the Way of Selfless Action. The only difference between the two ways is that of attitude. The man who treads the Path of Knowledge acts with a proper evaluation of his situation and with self-reliance, whereas the man who takes to the Path of Selfless Action also acts, but with reliance upon the mercy of the adored God. Action is a basic requirement of both the ways and in each of them it is the same, although it has to be done in two different ways. The attitudes behind the action in the two ways are different.

So Krishn asks Arjun to listen to him while he speaks of the Way of Selfless Action, armed with which he can effectively destroy the bonds of action and its consequence. Here the Yogeshwar has, for the first time, spoken of karm, although without explaining what it is. Instead of dwelling upon the nature of action, he describes its characteristic traits.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥४०॥

[ “Since selfless action neither wears out the seed from which it sprang nor has any adverse consequence, even a partial observance of this dharm liberates (one) from the dire terror (of repeated birth and death)”. ]

In the performance of action without coveting the fruits thereof, the initial impulse or the seed is not destroyed. It also does not give rise to any evil. So selfless action, even though done in small measures, frees us from the great fear represented by birth and death. That necessitates reflecting over the nature of such action and walking at least a few steps along its path. Worshippers who have renounced the vanity of earthly possessions have trodden this path, but so can those who lead the life of householders. Krishn tells Arjun to just sow the seed, for the seed is never destroyed. There is no power in nature, no weapon, which can destroy it. The material world can only cover it up momentarily and hide it for a while, but it cannot wipe out the initial inspiration, the seed, of the act of spiritual accomplishment.

According to Krishn, even the gravest of sinners can doubtlessly cross over by the ark of knowledge. He means exactly this when he says that if the seed of selfless action is just planted, it is imperishable. It does not even have any adverse outcome in so much as it does not abandon us midway after showing us how we can progress towards spiritual attainment. Even if we give it up, it works doggedly on for our final liberation. This is why selfless action, even in a small measure, provides freedom from the great dread of birth and death. Once planted, even after repeated birth, the seed of such action takes us to the realization of God and to emancipation alike from pleasure and from pain. The question is what we have to do if we choose the Way of Selfless Action.

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥४१॥

[ “On this auspicious path, O Kurunandan (Arjun), the resolute mind is one, but the minds of the ignorant are divided and many.’’ ]

The mind which is earnestly and firmly oriented to selfless action is unified. Selfless action is only one and its outcome is also one. Spiritual accomplishment is the only true achievement, The gradual realization of this attainment by fighting against forces of the material world is an enterprise. This enterprise and resolute action, with a single goal are also one and the same. Then what about those who propagate more than one mode of action? In Krishn’s view they are not true worshippers. The minds of such men are endlessly divided and that is why they conjure up endless ways.

**यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः।**

**वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥४२॥**

**कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम्।**

**क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥४३॥**

[ “Desire-ridden men, O Parth, who are given only to listening to Vedic promises of rewards for action, who believe that the attainment of heaven is the highest goal of temporal birth and its activities, and who speak pretentious words to describe the many rites and ceremonies that they regard as conducive to the achievement of worldly pleasure and power, are ignorant and bereft of discernment.’’ ]

The minds of such men are riddled with endless dissensions. Covetous and attached to the tempting promises made by Vedic verses, they regard heaven as the most sublime goal and they believe in nothing beyond this. Such ignorant men not only devise numerous rites and ceremonies, the performance of which is expected to bring such rewards as the next birth, sensual enjoyment, and worldly dominion, but also flaunt them in flowery and affected language. To put it differently, the

minds of men without discrimination have infinite divisions. They are addicted to precepts which promise fruits of action and accept the pledges of the Ved as final and authoritative. They regard heaven as the highest goal. Because their minds are split by many differences, they invent numerous modes of worship. They do speak of God, but behind the cover of his name they build up a whole multitude of ritual ceremonies. Now, are these activities not a form of action? Krishn denies that these activities are true action. What then is true action? The question remains unanswered at this point. For the time being Krishn only states that ignorant minds are divided minds, because of which they formulate an unlimited number of rites and ceremonies that are not real action. They not only expound them but also give utterance to them in figurative language. Let us now see the effect of all this.

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम्।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥४४॥

[ “Delighted by ornamental words and attached to worldly pleasures and dominance, men without discrimination have irresolute minds.” ]

Minds which are affected by the tempting words of such people are also corrupted and they also fail to accomplish what is worthwhile. The people whose minds are enamoured of such words, and who are attached to sensual enjoyment and temporal power, are deprived of their capacity for action; they are bereft of resolve for the true action that is a prerequisite of contemplation of the worshipped God.

But who are the people that lend their ears to these unwise men? Of course, rather than being knowers of the Self within and the Supreme Spirit without, they are the ones who are addicted to sensual pleasure and temporal power. The minds of such men are lacking in will for the action that is needed for the ultimate union of the Self with the Supreme Spirit.

What exactly is the meaning of the assertion that they, too, are mistaken who are blindly devoted to Vedic pronouncements? Krishn speaks about this:

**त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन।**

**निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥४५॥**

[ “Since all the Ved, O Arjun, only illumine the three properties, you should rise above them, be free from the contradictions of happiness and sorrow, rest on that which is constant, and be unconcerned with getting what you do not have as well as with protecting what you have, in order to dedicate yourself to the Self within.” ]

The Ved only illumine the three properties of nature; they know nothing of what is beyond them. So Arjun should go beyond the sphere of action laid down by the Ved. How to do this? Krishn advises Arjun to liberate himself from the conflicts of joy and sorrow, concentrate on the one changeless reality, and desire neither the unobtained nor the obtained; so that he may devote himself single-mindedly to the indwelling Self. This is how he can rise above the Ved. But is there any precedence of anyone going beyond them? Krishn says that as a man transcends the Ved, even so he comes face to face with the Supreme Spirit, and that the man who is aware of him is a true Vipr, a Brahmin.

**यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके।**

**तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥४६॥**

[ “After the final absolution a man does not need the Ved, just as we do not need a pond when there is the all-stretching ocean (around).’’ ]

When a man is surrounded by the ocean on all sides, he has no use for a pond. Just so a Brahmin who has gained knowledge of the Supreme Spirit has no use for the Ved. That means that the one who

knows God transcends the Ved, and that man is a Brahmin. So Krishn counsels Arjun to rise above the Ved and be a Brahmin.

Arjun is a Kshatriy and Krishn is exhorting him to be a Brahmin. Brahmin and Kshatriy are, among others, names of qualities that are inherent in the dispositions of different varn (or what are now more commonly known as castes). But the varn-tradition is originally, as we have already seen, action-oriented rather than a social provision determined by birth. What use has he for a petty pond who has availed himself of the crystal current of the Ganga? Some use a pond for ablution, while others wash their cattle in it. A sage who has known God by direct perception has the same kind of use for the Ved. They are undoubtedly useful. The Ved exists for stragglers who lag behind. Further elucidation of the problem begins from this point. Subsequently Krishn expounds the precautions to be observed in the performance of action.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥४७॥

[ “Since you are entitled only to the performance of action but never to the fruits thereof, you should neither desire rewards of action nor be drawn to inaction.” ]

Arjun, Krishn says, has the right to action but not to its results. So Arjun should persuade himself that fruits of action simply do not exist. He should not covet these fruits and neither should he grow disillusioned with action.

So far Krishn has first used the term “action” (karm: meaning both action and its consequence) in the thirty-ninth verse of the chapter, but he has not indicated what this karm is and how to perform it. He has, however, described its characteristic traits.

(a) He has told Arjun that by the performance of action he will be freed from the bonds of action.

(b) He has then said that the seed or initial impulse of action is indestructible. Once it is initiated, nature has no means to destroy it.

(c) There is, Arjun has been told, not even the slightest flaw in this action, for it never abandons us while we are stranded amidst the temptations of celestial pleasures and worldly affluence.

(d) Performance of this action, even in small proportions, can emancipate us from the great fear of birth and death.

But, as it is evident from the summary above, Krishn has not so far defined action. As for the way of doing it, he has said in the forty-first verse:

(e) The mind which is resolved to do this action is only one and the way of doing it is also only one. Does it mean, then, that people engaged in other multifarious activities are not really engaged in the worship of God? According to Krishn, the activities of such people are not action.

Explaining why it is so, he adds that the minds of men without discernment are riven by endless divisions, because of which they tend to invent and elaborate an unlimited number of rites and ceremonies. So they are not true worshippers. They use pretentious and ornate language to describe these rites and ceremonies. So that man's mind is also poisoned who is lured by the charm of their words. The ordained action is, therefore, only one, although we have not yet been told what precisely it is.

In the forty-seventh verse Krishn has told Arjun that he has a right to action, but not to its fruits. So Arjun should not desire these fruits.

At the same time he ought not to lose faith in the performance of action. In other words, he should be constantly and devotedly engaged in its performance. But Krishn has not yet said what this action is. The verse is usually interpreted as meaning: Do whatever you wish, only do not desire its fruits. That is, say those who interpret the verse thus, what selfless action is all about. In fact, however, Krishn has not so far told us what this action is that men are required to do. He has so far elaborated only its characteristics, what the gains from it are, and the precautions that have to be observed in the course of its performance. Yet the question of what exactly selfless action is has so far remained unanswered. It is, in fact, answered only in Chapters 3 and 4.

Krishn again reverts to what he has already said:

**योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय।**

**सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥४८॥**

[ ‘‘The equipoise of mind that arises from profound absorption in the performance of action after renouncing attachment and being even-minded in respect of success and failure is, O Dhananjay (Arjun), given the name of yog.” ]

Resting in yog, renouncing infatuation for worldly ties, and looking at success and failure with an equal mind, Arjun should undertake action. But what action? Krishn’s pronouncement is that men should do selfless action. Equipoise of mind is what is called yog. The mind in which there is no unevenness is full of equanimity. Greed destroys its evenness, attachments make it unequal, and desire for the fruits of action destroy its serenity. That is why there should be no hankering after the fruits of action. At the same time, however, there should also be no diminishing of faith in the performance of action. Renouncing attachment to all things, seen as well as unseen, and giving up all concern about achievement and non-achievement, we should only

keep our eyes fixed on yog, the discipline that joins the individual Soul with the Supreme Spirit, and lead a life of strenuous action.

Yog is thus the state of culmination. But it is also the initial stage. At the outset our eyes should be fixed on the goal. It is for this reason that we should act keeping our eyes on yog. Equanimity of mind is also named yog. When the mind cannot be shaken by failure and success, and nothing can destroy its evenness, it is said to be in the state of yog. It cannot then be moved by passion. Such a state of mind enables the Soul to identify himself with God. This is another reason why this state is called Samattwa Yog, the discipline that makes the mind filled with equanimity. Since there is, in such a state of mind, complete renunciation of desire, it is also called the Way of Selfless Action (Nishkam Karm Yog). Since it requires us to perform action, it is also known as the way of Action (Karm Yog). Since it unites the Self with the Supreme Spirit, it is called yog. It is necessary to keep in mind that both success and failure should be viewed with equanimity, that there should be no sense of attachment, and that there is no desire for the rewards of action. It is thus that the Way of Selfless Action and the Way of Knowledge are the same:

**दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनंजय।**

**बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥४९॥**

[ “Take refuge in the way of equanimity (yog), Dhananjay, because action with desire for the fruits thereof is far inferior to the path of discrimination, and they are indeed paupers who are motivated by lust (for rewards).’’ ]

Covetous action is distant from and inferior to the Path of Discrimination. Those who yearn after praise are wretched men, vile and devoid of judgement. Arjun is, therefore, urged to find shelter in the even-minded Way of Knowledge. Even if the Soul is rewarded with what he

desires, he will have to assume a body in order to enjoy it. So long as the process of coming and going, of birth and death, lasts, how can there be ultimate redemption? A seeker should not desire even absolution, for absolution is total freedom from passions. Thinking over the acquisition of rewards if he gets any, his worship is interrupted. Why should he now continue any further with the task of meditation on God? He goes astray. So yog should be observed with a perfectly even mind.

Krishn describes the Way of Knowledge (Gyan-Karm-Sanyas Yog) as also the Buddhi-or Sankhya Yog. He suggests to Arjun that he has attempted to enlighten him on the nature of "discrimination" in its relation to the Way of Knowledge. In truth, the only difference between the two is that of attitude. In the one, one has to proceed only after making a proper examination of the constructive and negative aspects of the undertaking, while in the other, too, equanimity has to be preserved. So it is also called the Way of Equanimity and Discrimination (Samattwa-Buddhi Yog). Because of this and because men possessed of desire for rewards are reduced to miserable wretchedness, Arjun is advised to find shelter in the Way of Knowledge.

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०॥

[ "As the Soul endowed with a mind of equanimity renounces both meritorious and evil deeds in this world itself and the art of acting with equipoise is yog, the endeavour to master the way of equanimity of discrimination is Samattwa Yog.'' ]

Stoic minds give up both the sacred and the sinful in this life itself. They adopt an attitude of detachment to both. So Arjun should strive for the equanimity of mind that is derived from the Way of Knowledge. Yog is the skill of acting with equipoise.

Two attitudes towards action prevail in the world. If people do a work, they also wish for its fruits. If there are no rewards, they may not even like to work. But Yogeshwar Krishn regards such action as bondage and states that worship of the one God is the only worthwhile action. In the present chapter he has only named action. Its definition is given in the ninth verse of Chapter 3; and its nature is dwelt upon at length in Chapter 4. In the verse about to be quoted, the skill of acting in freedom from worldly customs is that we should perform action and do it with dedication, but at the same time with voluntary renunciation of any right to its fruits. However, it is but natural to be curious about what will become of these fruits. But, of course, there is no doubt that selfless action is the right way of action. The whole energy of the desireless worshipper is then directed to his action. The human body is meant for worship of God. At the same time, though, one would like to know whether one has just always to go on acting or whether the performed action will also produce some result. Krishn now dwells upon this problem:

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः।

जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥५१॥

[ “Renouncing all desire for the fruits of their action and (thus) freed from the bondage of birth, wise men who are skilled in the way of equanimity and discrimination achieve the pure, immortal state.’’ ]

Wise men endowed with the yog of discrimination renounce the fruits arising from their action and are liberated from the bondage of birth and death. They achieve the pure, immortal state of oneness with God.

Application of intellect is categorized here into three kinds. Firstly by the way of descrimination (in verses 31-39). This yields two results : Divine riches and ultimate bliss. Secondly by the way of selfless Action (in verse 39-51) which produces only one consequence-liberation from

the dire terror of repeated birth and death by attaining immaculate indestructible oneness with god. These are the only two ways described for the yog. The third type of application of intellect is done by the ignorants who are engaged in other endless modes of actions and who fall into the cycles of repeated birth and death according to their deeds.

Arjun's vision is limited only to acquisition of sovereignty over the three worlds and even over Gods. But even for the sake of these he is not inclined to war. At this point, Krishn reveals to him the truth that a man can attain to the immortal state through selfless action. The Way of Selfless Action also provides access to the state of being which death cannot break into. At what point, though, will a man be inclined to the performance of such action?

**यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति।**

**तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥५२॥**

[ "At the time when your mind has successfully made its way across the swamp of attachment, you will be capable of the renunciation which is worth hearing of and which you have heard.'']

The very moment Arjun's mind, indeed the mind of any worshipper, has steered safely across the marsh of attachment, and when it is completely free from yearning for either children or riches or honour, all its worldly ties are broken. It will then be receptive, not only to what is proper for hearing, but also to the idea of renunciation, making it an integral part of its action according to what it has learnt. At the present moment, however, Arjun is unprepared to listen to what is proper for hearing; and so the question of its influencing his conduct, of course, simply does not arise. Krishn again illumines the same worthiness:

**श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला।**

**समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥५३॥**

[ “When your mind, now shaken by the conflicting precepts of the Ved, achieves a changeless and constant existence within the being of Supreme Spirit, you will then attain to immortal state through profound meditation.’’ ]

When Arjun’s mind, at present riven through and through by the contradictory teachings of the Ved* *[*The first part of the Ved, known as “Works” (Shruti), the Ved known by revelation, and chiefly made up of hymns and instructions regarding sacred rites and ceremonies. The second part, known as “Knowledge” (Smriti), is made up of the Upanishad that are concerned with awareness of God, the highest aspect of sacred truth.]*, achieves the state of steady contemplation of God, it will become changeless and constant, and then he will master the skill of even minded discrimination. He will then achieve the perfect equilibrium which is the ultimate state of immortality. This is the crowning point of yog. The Ved undoubtedly instruct us; but as Krishn points out,the contradictory injunctions of the Shruti confuse the mind. Precepts there are many, but it is unfortunate that people usually keep away from the knowledge that is fit for learning.

Arjun is told that he will reach the stage of immortality, the culmination of yog, when his agitated mind achieves constancy by meditation. This naturally whets Arjun’s curiosity about the nature of sages who exist in an exalted state of perfect spiritual bliss, and whose minds are immovable and at peace in the state of abstract meditation. So he asks Krishn:

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव।**

**स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥५४॥**

[ “Arjun said, ‘what, O Keshav, is the mark of the man who has attained to the state of true meditation and equanimity of mind, and how does this man with firm discrimination speak, sit, and walk ?’’’ ]

That Soul which has resolved his doubts is in the state of samadhi or perfect absorption of thought in the Supreme Spirit, the one worthy object of meditation. One who has achieved even- minded discrimination by identification with the eternal essence, which has neither a beginning nor an end, is said to be in the state of abstract contemplation of the nature of the Supreme Spirit. Arjun asks Krishn for the qualities of the man with a mind of equanimity engaged in such contemplation. How does a man with steadfast wisdom speak? How does he sit? What is his gait? Arjun has thus asked four questions. Thereupon Krishn says:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान्।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥५५॥

[ ''The Lord said, 'A man is then said to be steadfast in mind when he has renounced all the desires of his mind and achieved contentment of the Self through the Self.''' ]

When a man has renounced all his desires and achieved his Soul's contentment through the contemplation of his Soul, he is said to be a man of firm discernment. This Self is apprehended only through complete abandonment of passion. The sage who has viewed the ineffable beauty of his Self and found perfect satisfaction in him is the man with a steady judgement.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥५६॥

[ "He is indeed a steady-minded sage who is unmoved by sorrow and indifferent to happiness, and who has overcome his passion, fear and anger.'' ]

He whose mind is untroubled by bodily, accidental, and worldly sorrows, and who has rid himself of desire for physical pleasures, and whose passions, fear, and anger have been subdued, is the sage with discrimination who has achieved the culmination of spiritual discipline. Krishn then points out other qualities of this saintly man:

**यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम्।**

**नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५७॥**

[ “That man has a steady mind who is entirely free from attachment and who neither gloats over success nor abhors failure.” ]

That man has a firm wisdom who is totally free from infatuation and who neither welcomes good fortune nor repudiates misfortune. That alone is auspicious which draws a Soul to the being of God, whereas that which pulls the mind to temptations of the material world is inauspicious. The man of discrimination is not too happy in favourable circumstances and he also does not scorn adversities, because neither is the object which is fit for attainment different from him nor is there for him any evil that may sully the purity of his mind. That is to say that he has now no need for further striving.

**यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।**

**इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५८॥**

[ “As a turtle pulls in its limbs, this man reins in his senses from all objects, and then he truly has a steady mind.’’ ]

When a man pulls back his senses from all sides and restrains them within his mind like a turtle pulling its head and feet within its shell, his mind is steady. But it is only an analogy. As soon as the turtle knows that the danger is gone, it again expands its limbs. Does a man of

steadfast wisdom also, in the same way, let his senses loose after restraining them, and resume enjoyment of worldly pleasures?

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥५९॥

[ "While objects of sensual pleasure cease to be for the man who withdraws his senses from them, his desire for these objects yet remains; but the desires of the man of discrimination are completely erased by his perception of God.'' ]

The objects of sense come to an end for the man who has rejected them because his senses no longer perceive them, but his desires yet survive. The feeling of attachment lives on. But the passions of the yogi, the doer of selfless action, are annihilated by his perception of the ultimate essence that is God.

The accomplished, or enlightened, sage does not, like the turtle, re-extend his senses to objects which are pleasing to them. When once his senses have shrivelled, all the influences and impressions (sanskar) he has carried with him from a previous existence are irrevocably dead. His senses do not then return to life. By apprehending God through the observance of the Way of Selfless Action, even the attachments to objects of sensual pleasure become extinct. Force has often been a feature of meditation, and by its use seekers rid themselves of objects of sense. But thoughts of these objects persist. These attachments are brought to an end only with the perception of God and never before that, because before this stage residues of matter persist.

In this connection, my most revered teacher Shree Parmanand Ji used to cite an event from his own life. He had heard three voices from heaven when he was about to give up home. We respectfully asked him why these voices from heaven came to him alone; there had not been any for us. He replied that he, too, had the same doubt. But then he had

an intuition that he had been an ascetic during his last seven births. During the first four of these he had only roamed about garbed in a holy man's paraphernalia, with a sandal paste mark on his forehead, ash rubbed on his body, and carrying the water pot used by ascetics. He had then lived in ignorance of yog. But during the last three births he had been a true saint, as such a Soul should be; and there was now the awakening of the way of yog in him. In the last life final liberation had been almost at hand and the end was in view, but a couple of his desires had remained. Although he had firmly controlled his outward body, there were these passions within him. That was why he had to go through yet another birth. And in this birth within a limited time God had freed him from all his passions, rendered him two resounding slaps as it were by providing him with all sights and sounds, and made him a true sadhu.

Krishn means precisely the same when he proclaims that although a man's association with objects of sense ends when he restrains them from reacting to these objects, he is rid of desire for these objects only when he knows his own Self as the identical God through meditation. So we have to act until we have achieved this perception. Goswami Tulsidas has also said that at first there are passions in the heart, which are swept away only by true devotion to God.

Krishn speaks about how difficult it is to withdraw the senses from their objects:

**यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः।**

**इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥६०॥**

**तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः।**

**वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६१॥**

[ "O son of Kunti, men ought to subdue their senses which seize forcibly even wise and striving minds, and devote themselves to me with perfect

concentration, because only that man's mind is unwavering who has achieved control of his senses." ]

Mutinous senses ravish even discerning and active minds, and undo their steadiness. So with full control over his senses, equipped with yog and devotion, Arjun should find shelter in God, of whom Krishn is an incarnation, for that man alone has a firm mind who has subdued his senses. Here Yogeshwar Krishn explains what ought to be prevented in the course of worship, as also the components of spiritual seeking which it is the duty of men to undertake. Restraint and prohibition alone cannot subdue the senses. Along with negation of senses there must also be incessant contemplation of the desired God. In the absence of such reflection, the mind will be preoccupied with material objects, the evil consequence of which we see in the words of Krishn himself.

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते।

सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥६२॥

[ "They whose thoughts are of sensual objects are attached to them, attachment gives rise to desires, and anger is born when these desires are obstructed.'' ]

The feeling of attachment persists in men who have yet got over their concern with the objects of sense. Desire is born from attachment. And there is anger when there is an obstacle in the way of satisfaction of desire. And what does the feeling of anger give rise to ?

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥६३॥

[ "Delusion is born from anger, by which memory is confused; confusion of memory undermines the faculty of discrimination and, when discrimination is lost, the seeker deviates from the means of absolution.'']

Confusion and ignorance arise from anger. Distinction between the eternal and the transient is obliterated. Remembrance is shaken by delusion, as it happens with Arjun. Krishn says again that in such a state of mind one cannot determine wisely what to do and what not to do. Confusion of memory weakens the seeker's dedication and loss of discrimination makes him deviate from his goal of being one with God.

Here Krishn has emphasized the importance of cultivating unconcern with sensual objects. The worshipper's mind should rather always be concerned with that-word, form, incarnation, or abode-by which his mind may be enabled to be one with God. The mind is drawn to sensual objects when the discipline of worship is relaxed. Thoughts of these objects produce attachment, which in its own turn results in desire for them. Anger is generated if the satisfaction of this desire is obstructed in any way. And ignorance finally undoes the power of discernment. The Way of Selfless Action is also said to be the Way of Knowledge, for it has always to be kept in view that desire must not be allowed to enter the worshipper's mind. There are, after all, no real fruits. Advent of desire is inimical to wisdom. Steady contemplation is, therefore, a necessity. A man who does not always think of God strays from the right path that will lead him to ultimate bliss and glory. However, there is one consolation. The chain of worship is only broken, not completely destroyed. Once the joy of worship has been experienced, when taken up again, it resumes from the same point at which it was discontinued.

'This is the fate of the worshipper who is attached to sensual objects. But what is the lot of the seeker who has mastered his mind and heart?

**रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन्।**

**आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥६४॥**

[ “But that man achieves spiritual tranquillity who has mastered his mind, and who remains unaffected by sense-objects although he may be roaming amidst them, because his senses are properly restrained.” ]

Possessed of the means of spiritual realization, the sage who has experienced an intuitive perception of the identity of Self and the Supreme Spirit achieves the state of the most sublime peace, because he has subdued his senses, and therefore remained untouched by their objects even though he may be wandering in their midst. No prohibitions are needed for such a man. There is for him nothing unpropitious anywhere against which he should fight and defend himself. There is also for him no good for which he should yearn.

**प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते।**

**प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥६५॥**

[ “After realizing the ultimate repose, all his (the seeker’s) sorrows disappear, and the blissful mind of such a man quickly grows in firmness.’’ ]

Blessed with a vision of God’s ineffable glory and his divine grace, all the worshipper’s griefs-the temporal world and its objects which are the abode of all sorrows-vanish and his power of discrimination grows strong and steady. Hereafter, Krishn dwells upon the lot of those who have not achieved the saintly condition:

**नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना।**

**न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥६६॥**

[ “A man without spiritual accomplishment has no wisdom nor true faith, and a man without devotion knows no peace of mind. Since happiness depends on peace, how can such men be happy?” ]

A man who has not undertaken meditation is devoid of selfless action oriented wisdom. This impoverished man is even deficient in the

feeling of devotion to the all-pervading Spirit. How can such a man, without an awareness of the Self within and the God without, be at peace? And how can he, without peace, experience happiness? There can be no devotion without knowing the object of devotion and knowledge comes from contemplation. Without devotion there can be no peace and a man with a disturbed mind cannot experience happiness, much less the state of changeless, eternal bliss.

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनु विधीयते।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥६७॥

[ "For, as the wind captures the boat on water, just so even one of the senses, that roam amidst objects of their gratification and with which the intellect dwells, is strong enough to sweep away the discrimination of one who is unpossessed of spiritual attainment.'' ]

As the wind drives a boat far away from its destination, even one out of the five senses roving amongst objects perceived by the intellect can get hold of the man who has not undertaken the task of spiritual quest and discipline. Therefore incessant remembrance of God is essential. Krishn again dwells upon the importance of action-oriented conduct.

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६८॥

[ ''Therefore, O the mighty-armed (Arjun), the man who prevents his senses from straying to objects has a steady discrimination." ]

The man who restricts his senses from being drawn to their objects is a man of steady wisdom. "Arm" is a measure of the sphere of action. God is called "mighty-armed" (mahabahu), although he is bodiless and works everywhere without hands and feet. The one who becomes one with him or is inclined to him and is on the way to his

sublime splendour is also therefore, “mighty-armed.” That is the significance of the use of this epithet for both Krishn and Arjun.

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥६९॥

[ “The true worshipper (yogi) remains awake amidst what is night for all creatures, but the perishable and transient worldly pleasures amidst which all living creatures stay awake are like night for the sage who has perceived reality.” ]

The transcendental Spirit is like night for living beings because he can be neither seen nor comprehended by thought. So he is like night, but it is in this night that the spiritually conscious man remains awake because he has seen the formless and known the incomprehensible. The seeker finds access to God through control of senses, peace of mind, and meditation. That is why the perishable worldly pleasures for which living beings toil day after day is night for God’s true worshipper.

The sage alone, who beholds the individual Self and the Universal Self and is indifferent to desire, succeeds in his enterprise of God-realization. So he dwells in the world and is yet untouched by it. Let us now see what Krishn has to say on the way in which this realized sage conducts himself.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं

समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत्।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे

स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥७०॥

[ “As the water of the many rivers falls into the full and ever constant ocean without affecting its tranquillity, even so the pleasures of sense

merge into a man of steady discrimination without producing any deviation, and such a man attains to the state of the most sublime peace rather than yearn for sensual enjoyment.'' ]

The full and changeless ocean assimilates all the rivers that flow violently into it without losing its repose. Similarly the man who is aware of the oneness of his Self and the Supreme Spirit assimilates all worldly pleasures within himself without in any way straying from his chosen path. Rather than longing for sensual gratification, he aims at the achievement of the most sublime bliss of uniting his Self with the supreme God.

Ravaging everything that comes in their way-crops, men and animals, and their habitations-and with a frightening roar, the violently sweeping currents of hundreds of rivers fall into the ocean with a tremendous force but they can neither raise nor lower its level by even an inch; they only merge into the ocean. In the same violent way sensual pleasures assault the sage who has attained knowledge of reality and merge in him. They can impress on him neither weal nor woe. The actions of a worshipper are non good and non-evil; they transcend good and evil. The minds which are conscious of God, restrained and dissolved, bear only the mark of divine excellence. So how can any other impression be made on such a mind? In this one verse, thus, Krishn has answered several of Arjun's queries. Arjun was curious to learn the mark of a sage who knows the divine reality: how he speaks, how he sits, how he walks. With the single word-''ocean'' -the omniscient Krishn answers all these questions. The mark of a sage is that he is like an ocean. Like an ocean he is not bound by rules, that he must sit like this and walk like that. It is men like him who achieve the ultimate peace, for they have self-control. They who yearn for pleasure can have no peace.

**विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः।**

**निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥७१॥**

[ ‘‘The man who has renounced all desire, and who conducts himself without ego, arrogance, and attachment, is the one who achieves peace.’’ ]

Men who have given up all desire, and whose actions are entirely free from the feelings of I and mine, realize the ultimate peace beyond which there is nothing to strive for and achieve.

**एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति।**

**स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥७२॥**

[ “Such, O Arjun, is the steadfastness of the man who has realized God; after attaining to this state he subdues all temptation and, resting firmly in his faith, with his death he continues in this state of rapture of the union of his Self with God.’’ ]

Such is the state of one who has realized God. Rivers of temporal objects merge into these ocean-like sages who are endowed with self control and an intuitive perception of God.

It is said by some that the Geeta is completed in the second chapter itself. But the chapter can be accepted as a conclusion only if all the implications of action (karm) get elucidated by a mere naming of the process. In this chapter Krishn has told Arjun to listen to him on the Way of Selfless Action, for by knowing it he will be liberated from the shackles of material life. He has the right only to act, but he has no right to the fruits of his action. At the same time he ought not to lose dedication to action. He must always be prepared to act. By the performance of such action he secures the most exalted knowledge of the Self and of God, and achieves ultimate peace. All this Krishn has said, but not what action is.

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In fact, the section popularly known as “The Yog or Way of Discrimination” is not a chapter; it is but a contrivance of reviewers rather than a creation of the poet of the Geeta. There is nothing surprising in this, because we can at best interpret a work only according to our own understanding. In this “chapter”, as we have seen, by expounding the merits of action, and by indicating the precautions to be observed in the performance of action as well as the characteristic marks of the sage who has gained direct knowledge of the Self and God through perception, Krishn has aroused Arjun’s curiosity and also answered some of his queries. The Self is immutable and eternal. Arjun is exhorted to know it in order to learn reality. There are two ways of acquiring this knowledge, the Way of Discrimination or Knowledge and the Way of Selfless Action. Performance of the required action after a careful review of one’s capacity and self-determination is the Way of Knowledge, whereas applying oneself to the same task with loving dependence on the worshipped God is the Way of Selfless Action, also known as the Way of Pious Devotion (Bhakti Marg). Goswami Tulsidas has portrayed the two ways, both leading to ultimate liberation, thus: “I have two sons. The elder son is a man of discrimination. But the younger one is a mere boy, devoted to me like a faithful servant and desirous only of rendering me service and homage. The latter thus relies on me, whereas the former depends upon his own prowess. Both of them have, however, to struggle and fight against the same enemies, namely, passion and anger.

Krishn says in the same way that he has two kinds of devotees. There is first the follower of the Way of Knowledge (gyanmargi). Secondly, there is the follower of the Way of Devotion (bhaktimargi). The man of devotion or doer of selfless action finds refuge in God and proceeds on his chosen path with total dependence on his grace.

Possessed of confidence in his own strength, on the contrary, the man of discrimination goes along his way after making a proper evaluation of his own ability, as well as of the profit and loss in the enterprise. But the two have a common goal and the same enemies. Not only the man of discrimination, but also the man of devotion has to overcome the same adversaries, namely, anger, desire, and other impieties. Both of them have to renounce desire; and the action, too, that has to be performed under both the disciplines is one and the same.

Thus concludes the Second Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **"Karm-Jigyasa,"** or **"Curiosity About Action."**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Second Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 3

## Urging The Enemy's Destruction

In Chapter 2, Krishn told Arjun that the knowledge he had discoursed upon was related to the Way of Knowledge. And what is that knowledge except that Arjun ought to fight? If he is a victor he will be rewarded with the most exalted state and, even in defeat, he will have a godly existence in heaven. There is everything in victory, including success, and godhood even in defeat. More or less, in either case there is some gain and absolutely no loss. Krishn then explained the same knowledge in relation to the Way of Selfless Action, by which Arjun could be completely free from the compulsions of action. He also indicated the characteristic features of the way and stressed the essential precautions that have to be observed in the course of such action. Arjun will be liberated from the fetters of action if he does not desire its fruits and engages in it selflessly, but without any weakening of his dedication to its performance. However, although ultimately there will be absolution, this way-the Way of Selfless Action-is one on which Arjun could not see the continuance of his own individual being.

So he thought the Way of Knowledge easier and more readily accessible than the Way of Selfless Action and wished to know why Krishn was urging him, although he himself believed the Way of Knowledge to be superior to the Way of Selfless Action, to engage in such a dreadful act as killing his own kinsmen. It was a reasonable query. If we really have to go somewhere to which there are two ways,

we shall surely try to find which one of the two is less hazardous. If we do not ask this question, we are not true way fares-not true seekers. So Arjun turns to Krishn.

अर्जुन उवाच

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव॥१॥

[ "Arjun said, 'O Janardan, if you think knowledge superior to action, why do you, O Keshav, ask me to engage in fearsome action?' '' ]

"Janardan" is one who is merciful to his people. So Arjun is hopeful that Krishn will enlighten him on why he is prompting him to adopt the dreadful way. Arjun finds the way frightening because on this way he has only the right to act, but without entitlement at any time to the rewards of his action. There should also be no loss of dedication and, with constant submission and his eyes fixed on the way, he has to be incessantly engaged in the task.

Has not Krishn promised him that following the Way of Knowledge, he will in the case of victory attain to the Supreme Spirit, whereas even in the event of defeat he will be privileged to lead a godly life? Moreover, he has to proceed on the way only after a due evaluation of his assets and liabilities. So he finds knowledge easier than selfless action, and he begs of Krishn:

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे।

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम्॥२॥

[ "Since your complex words are so confusing to my mind, kindly tell me the one way by which I may attain to the state of blessedness.'' ]

Krishn had, in fact, set out to dispel Arjun's irresolution, but his words have only added to his doubts. So he requests Krishn to tell him

unambiguously the one way by which he may achieve emancipation. Krishn then speaks to him.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ।**

**ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम्॥३॥**

[ ''The Lord said, 'I told you before, O the sinless (Arjun), two ways of spiritual discipline, the Way of Discrimination or Knowledge for sages and the, Way of Selfless Action for men of action.' " ]

"Before" here does not mean a bygone era (yug) like the Golden or Treta Age* *[*In Hindu thought there are four ages (yug) of the world, Satya Treta, Dwapar, and Kali (the present age). The first and the last are also known as "Golden" and "Iron'' respectively.]*. It rather refers to the last chapter in which Krishn had spoken of the two ways, recommending the Way of Knowledge for men of wisdom and the Way of Selfless Action for those who are actively engaged in the task that will finally make them one with God. In both the ways, action has to be performed. So action is an essential.

**न कर्मणामनारम्भान् नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते।**

**न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति॥४॥**

[ "Man neither attains to the final state of actionlessness by desisting from work, nor does he achieve Godlike perfection by just renunciation of work.'' ]

There is no escape from action. A man cannot achieve the state of actionlessness by not commencing work, nor can he attain to the state of divine perfection by merely giving up an undertaken task. So, whether Arjun prefers, the Way of Knowledge or the Way of Selfless Action, he has to toil alike for each of them.

Usually, at this point, seekers on the way to God begin to look for shortcuts and escapes. We have to be on our guard against the common misconception that we become “selfless doers” just because we do not undertake any work. That is why Krishn emphasizes the point that one does not achieve the state of actionlessness by just not beginning work. The point where both good and evil deeds cease completely, where alone there is true “actionlessness,” can be reached only through action. There are the misguided ones, on the other hand, who believe that they are unconcerned with action because they are men of intellect and discernment, and because there is no action as such on their chosen path. But they who renounce action under such an impression are not really men of wisdom. Just renunciation of an undertaken task cannot lead anyone to the attainment of realizing and becoming one with God.

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः॥५॥

[ “Since all men have doubtlessly sprung from nature, no one can at any time live even for a moment without action.” ]

No man can ever even for a fraction of a second live without action because the three properties of matter born from nature compel him to act. As long as nature and its properties are, no man can be without action.

Krishn says in the thirty-third and thirty-seventh verses of Chapter 4, that all actions cease to be and dissolve into the most exalted knowledge: the knowledge obtained from meditation on the sublime truths which teach man to be aware of his own Self and how he may be reunited with the Supreme Spirit. The fire of this knowledge annihilates all action. What really the Yogeshwar means by this is that action ceases to be when yog has gone beyond the three properties of the material world, and when a clear outcome of the meditative process comes forth

in the form of a direct perception of as well as dissolution of the Self in God. But before this completion of the ordained task, action does not end and we are not rid of it.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥६॥

[ "That deluded man is a dissembler who apparently restrains his senses by violence* *[*Hatt yog: so called because it is practised in ways that do violence to the body. Such as standing on one leg, holding up the arms, inhaling smoke, etc.]* but whose mind continues to be preoccupied with objects of their gratification." ]

Such ignorant men who dwell upon sensual objects while restraining the senses outwardly by hatt yog are false men and not men of wisdom at all. It is evident that such practices were prevalent in the age of Krishn, too. There were some who, instead of practising what ought to be practiced just restrained their senses by unnatural means and claimed that they were wise and perfect. But according to Krishn such people are cunning liars. Whether our preference is the Way of Discrimination or the Way of Selfless Action, work has to be undertaken for each of them.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन।

कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते॥७॥

[ "And, O Arjun, that man is meritorious who restrains his senses with his mind and employs his organs of action to do selfless work in a spirit of complete detachment.'' ]

He is a superior man who exerts inner (rather than external) control over his senses, so that his mind is freed from passions, and who does his duty in a state of total desirelessness. Now, although we have known that work has to be done, the difficulty is that we do not yet

understand the precise nature of this work. That is also Arjun’s problem and Krishn now proceeds to resolve it.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः॥८॥

[ “You ought to do your prescribed action as enjoined by scripture, for doing work is better than not doing any, and in the absence of it even the journey of your body may not be completed.’’ ]

Arjun is prompted to do the prescribed action-the ordained task-which is distinct from all other kinds of work. Performance of this action is preferable to inaction, because if we do it and traverse even a small part of our way, it can rescue us from the great fear of birth and death. Performance of one’s spiritual duty - the ordained action- is, therefore, the better course. By not doing it we cannot even complete the journey of our Soul through different bodies. This journey is usually interpreted as “sustenance of the physical body.” But what kind of sustenance is this? Are we a physical body? This Soul, the embodied Self, that we know by the name of Purush-what else has he been doing except making his physical journey through endless lives? When clothes are worn out, we change them and put on new ones. Just so, this whole world, from the lowest creatures to the most highly evolved, from Brahma* *[*The first and the most ancient of the sacred Hindu Trinity who is believed to have presided over the act of creation.]* to its most distant limits, is mutable. Through births, low and high, this Soul has been making his physical journey since an unknown beginning. Action is something that completes this journey. If there is yet to be another birth, the journey is still incomplete. The seeker is still on his way, travelling through bodies. A journey is complete only when the destination is reached. After being dissolved in God, the Self does not have to travel any further through physical births. The chain of the Self’s rejection of old bodies and assumption of new ones is now broken. So

action is something that frees the Self, the Purush, from the necessity of journeying through bodies. Krishn tells Arjun in the sixteenth verse of Chapter 4: “By this action you shall be freed from the evil that binds the world.” So action, as used in the Geeta, is something that liberates from the bondage of world.

However, the question of what this ordained action is still remains unresolved. Krishn now begins to answer the question.

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर॥९॥

[ “Since the conduct of yagya is the only action and all other business in which people are engaged are only forms of worldly bondage, O son of Kunti, be unattached and do your duty to God well.’’ ]

Contemplation of God is the only real action. That conduct is action which enables the mind to concentrate on God. It is a prescribed act and, according to Krishn, tasks other than this are only forms of worldly bondage. Anything other than the performance of this yagya is a form of slavery rather than action. It is important to remind ourselves once more of Krishn’s injunction to Arjun that he shall be freed from the evils of this world only by doing the one real work. The accomplishment of this work, of yagya, is action; and Arjun is urged to do it well in a spirit of detachment. It cannot be performed without disinterest in the world and its objects.

So the conduct of yagya is action. But another question that now arises is what this worthwhile act of yagya is. Before answering this question, however, Krishn first gives a brief account of the origin of yagya, as also of what it has to offer. It is only in Chapter 4 that it is clarified what that yagya is-the doing of which is action. It is evident from this that it is Krishn’s way that he first describes the characteristic features of the subject he has to elucidate in order to create a respectful

attitude towards it, then points out the precautions that have to be observed in the course of its performance, and only finally expounds the main principle.

Before we proceed, let us recall what Krishn has said of another aspect of action: that it is a prescribed ordained conduct and that what is usually done in its name is not true action.

The term “action” was first used in Chapter 2. Its characteristic traits as well as the precautions needed for it were pointed out. But the nature of this action has remained unspecified. In Chapter 3, Krishn has so far said that no one can live without action. Since man lives in nature, he must act. Nevertheless there are people who restrain their sense organs by use of force, but whose minds are still occupied with objects of the senses. Such people are arrogant and their efforts are vain. So Arjun is told to restrain his senses to perform the ordained action. But the question yet remains: what action should he perform? He is told that the accomplishment of yagya is action. But that is not really answering the question. True that yagya is action; but what is yagya? In the present chapter Krishn only points out the origin and special features of yagya, and it is only in Chapter 4 that he will elaborate the concept of the action which is fit to be done.

A proper understanding of this definition of action is the key to our comprehension of the Geeta. All men are engaged in some work or the other, but that is different from true action. Some of them do farming, while others are engaged in trade and commerce. Some hold positions of power, while others; are just servants. Some profess that they are intellectuals, while others earn their living by manual labour. Some take up social service, while others serve the country. And for all these activities people have also invented contexts of selfishness and selflessness. But according to Krishn, they simply are not what he means by action. Whatever other than yagya is done is only a form of worldly

bondage, not true action. The performance of yagya is the only real action. But instead of explaining what yagya is, he now dwells upon its genesis.

**सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः।**

**अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक्॥१०॥**

[ "At the beginning of kalp-the course of self-realization* *[*Usually meaning 1000 yug (ages), making up a period of 432 million years of mortals, kalp also signifies a process of treatment for restoration of health [kayakalp). So kalp here means the whole course of self-realization.]* Prajapati Brahma shaped yagya along with mankind and enjoined on them to ascend by yagya which could give them what their hearts aspired to.'' ]

Prajapati* *[*Another epithet of the deity presiding over creation as well as of a true ascetic. He also is a pati, the lord and saviour. Like the deity he, too, prescribes a course of meditation. He is like a monarch and his disciples are his subjects. Thus prajapati here is the man of perfection who has become a transmitter of God's essence.]* Brahma, the god presiding over creation, made mankind along with yagya at the beginning and told men to progress through yagya. This yagya, wholly propitious, was prescribed or ordained as the action which would satisfy their hunger for realization of the eternal God.

Who was the creator of mankind along with yagya? Was it Brahma and who is he? Is he, as it is believed, the God with four heads and eight eyes? According to Krishn there are no beings like gods. The sage who has realized and become one with the Supreme Spirit, the fountainhead from which all mankind has arisen, is ''prajapati." Wisdom that results from knowledge of God is itself Brahma. At the moment of this realization the mind becomes a mere instrument. It is God himself who then speaks through the voice of the sage.

There is constant growth of wisdom after the commencement of spiritual adoration, or worship. Since at the beginning this wisdom is

endowed with knowledge of God, it is called brahmvitt. Gradually, as evil impulses are subdued and the knowledge of God is enriched, this wisdom is said to be brahmvidwar. As it ascends yet higher and gets more refined, it comes to be known as brahmvidwariyan. At this stage, the sage who is blessed with knowledge of God also achieves the capacity to bring others on to the way of spiritual growth. The highest point of wisdom is brahmvidwarisht, that state of divine inundation in which the spirit of God flows through it like a crystal current. Men who have attained to this state enter into and dwell in the Supreme Spirit from whom all mankind is born. The minds of such sages are mere instruments and it is they who are called "prajapati." By dissociating themselves from the contradictions of nature, they create the Self who is yet unaware of the process of meditation or God's worship. Conferring perfection which is in accordance with the spirit of yagya is the

creation of mankind. Prior to this human society is unconscious and chaotic. Creation has no beginning. Sanskar has always been there: but before the sages conferred perfection on it, it was deformed and in a state of anarchy. To shape it in accordance with the requirements of yagya is the act of refining and adorning.

Some such accomplished sage or sages created yagya besides creating mankind at the beginning of kalp, the course of Self-realization. The word ''kalp," however, also means cure of sickness. Physicians effect such cures and there are some who even rejuvenate us. But their remedies are only for ephemeral bodies. The true cure is that which provides liberation from the general malady of the world. The beginning of worship or adoration is the commencement of this remedy. When meditation is complete, we are wholly cured.

Thus sages with their beings in the Supreme Spirit gave a proper shape to spiritual excellence and yagya, and instructed men that they would prosper through the observance of yagya. By this prosperity they

did not mean that clay houses would change into brick-and-plaster mansions. Neither did they promise that men would begin to make more money. They rather wished men to know that yagya would fulfil their God-inclined aspirations. A logical question that confronts us here is whether yagya leads to immediate attainment of God or only by gradual steps. Brahma further said to mankind :

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ॥११॥

[ "And may you cherish gods by yagya and may gods foster you, for this is the means by which you will finally achieve the ultimate state." ]

Cherishing gods by yagya means fostering sacred impulses. And that is also how gods foster mankind. Thus, by mutual augmentation men will ultimately achieve that final bliss after which there is nothing more to achieve. The deeper we enter into yagya (later yagya will be explained as a way of worship), the more is the heart enriched with divinity. The Supreme Spirit is the only God and the means-the impulses-that provide access to that God are the ''divine treasure'' because they bring the ultimate God within reach. This, rather than the commonly imagined gods such as a piece of stone or mass of water, is the true divine wealth. In Krishn's words such gods have no existence. He further adds:

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः।

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः॥१२॥

[ "The gods you foster by yagya will shower upon you without asking all the joys you wish for, but the man who avails himself of these joys without having paid for them is truly a thief." ]

The divine riches we earn and store by yagya will give us nothing else besides joys related to the revered God. They are the only powers

which give. There is no other way to attain to the adored God. The man who tries to enjoy this state without making an offering of divine riches, the righteous impulses, is doubtlessly a thief who is given nothing. And since he gets nothing, what is there for him to enjoy? But he pretends all the same that he is perfect, a knower of the essence. Such a braggart is shy of the path of righteousness and so he is truly a thief (albeit an unsuccessful one). But what do the attainers gain?

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः।

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात्॥१३॥

[ "The wise who partake of what is left over from yagya are rid of all evil, but the sinners who cook only for the sustenance of their bodies partake of nothing but sin." ]

They who subsist on the food derived from yagya are absolved of all sins. The moment of achievement in the course of augmenting the divine plenty is also the moment of its completion. When yagya is complete, the leftover is God himself* *[*Food represents the lowest form in which the Supreme Spirit is manifested. The idea of God as food recurs through the Upanishad. In the Upanishad Prashn, the sage Pippalad says, "Food is Pran (the primal energy) and Rayi (the giver of form). From food grows seed, and from seed are born all creatures." According to the Upanishad Taittiriya, "Out of Brahm (God), who is the Self, came ether; out of ether, air; out of air, fire; out of fire, water; out of water, earth; out of earth, vegetation; out of vegetation, food; out of food, the body of man.]*. The same has been said by Krishn in a different way: the one who feeds on what is generated by yagya merges into the Supreme Spirit. The sage who feeds on God's manna that issues from yagya is liberated from all sins or, in other words, from birth and death. Sages eat for liberation, but a sinner eats for the sake of the body that is born through the medium of attachment. He feeds on evil. He may have sung hymns, known the way of worship, and also made a little bit of the way, but despite all this there arises in him a cloying desire that he should achieve something for the

body and its objects of attachment. And it is quite likely that he will also get what he desires. But then, after this “joy’’, he will find himself stationary at the very point from which he had begun his spiritual quest. What greater loss can there be than this? When the body itself is destructible, how long can its pleasures and joys be with us? So, irrespective of their divine adoration, such men partake only of sin.

They are not destroyed, but they do not progress on the way. That is why Krishn stresses action (worship) undertaken in a self-effacing spirit. He has so far said that the practice of yagya confers the highest glory and that it is a creation of accomplished realized sages. But why do such sages undertake the shaping and refinement of mankind?

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः।

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः॥१४॥

[ “All beings get their life from food, food grows from rain, rain emerges from yagya, and yagya is an outcome of action.” ]

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम्।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम्॥१५॥

[ “Be it known to you that action arose from the Ved and the Ved from the indestructible Supreme Spirit, so that the all-pervasive, imperishable God is ever present in yagya.” ]

All creatures are born from food. Food Is God himself whose breath is life. A man turns to yagya with his mind fixed on that divine manna. Food results from rain: not the rain that falls from clouds, but the shower of grace. The yagya which have been undertaken and stored earlier themselves come down as a shower of grace. Today’s worship is given back to us as grace the next day. That is why yagya is said to generate rain. If an indiscriminate oblation or offering to all of the so-called gods and burning of barley grains and oil seeds could produce

rain, why should deserts have remained barren? Thus rain here is the shower of grace that is an outcome of yagya. This yagya, again, arises from action and is indeed brought to completion by action.

Arjun is told to remember that this action is born from the Ved. The Ved is the voice of sages who live in God. The vivid perception, rather than cramming of certain verses, of the unmanifest essence is named Ved. The Ved is born from the imperishable God* *[*Of the Brihadaranyak Upanishad : "All Knowledge and all wisdom, what we know as the Rig Ved, the Yajur Ved, and the rest, have all been breathed forth from the Eternal. They are the breath of the Eternal."]*. The truths of the Ved have been proclaimed by great souls, but, since they have become one with God, the imperishable God himself speaks through them. It is for this that the Ved is said to be of divine origin. The Ved came from God. And the sages, being one with Him, are only instruments. It is he whose spokesmen they are. God manifests himself to them when they have restrained the desires of their mind by yagya. The omnipresent, ultimate, and imperishable God is, therefore, always present in yagya. So yagya is the only way to attain to him. This is what Krishn tells Arjun:

**एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः।**

**अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति॥१६॥**

[ "The man in this world, O Parth, who loves sensual pleasure and lead an impious life, and does not conduct himself in accordance with the thus prescribed cycle (of Self-realization), leads but a futile life." ]

The pleasure-loving, sinful man who, despite his birth in human form, does not conduct himself in keeping with the means of the ordained action or, to put it differently, does not follow the way of attaining to the state of immortality through fostering gods and so also himself by tending the divine riches of his nature, lives but in vain.

For the sake of recapitulation, Krishn named “action” in Chapter 2, whereas in this chapter he has told Arjun, and so all of us, to perform the ordained action. Observance of yagya is this action. Whatever else is done besides this is only a part of worldly life. So one should, in a spirit of detachment, perform the action of yagya. Krishn has then given an account of the characteristic features of yagya and said that yagya had its origin in Brahma. Mankind is inclined to yagya with sustenance in view. Yagya arises from action and action from the divinely inspired Ved, whereas the visionaries who perceived the Vedic precepts were enlightened sages. But these great Souls had shed their ego. With this attainment, what was left as an outcome was only the imperishable God. The Ved is therefore arisen from God and God is ever existent in yagya. The impious lover of sensual pleasures who does not follow the way of this prescribed action lives in vain. That is to say that yagya is an action in which there is no comfort for the senses. The injunction demands participation in the act with complete subjugation of the senses. Sinful are they who yearn for sensual comforts. But even after all this, it has not been defined what yagya is. That brings us to the question whether we have to practice yagya for ever, or will there also be an end to it ? Yogeshwar Krishn speaks about it:

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः।

आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते॥१७॥

[ “But there remains nothing more to do for the man who rejoices in his Self, finds contentment in his Self, and feels adequate in his Self.’’ ]

The man who is utterly devoted to his embodied Soul, finds satisfaction in him and feels that he needs nothing more besides him-has nothing more left to do. After all, the Self was the goal. Once the unmanifest, immortal, indestructible essence of the Soul has been realized, there is nothing beyond to seek. A man such as this needs

neither action nor worship. Soul and God-Self and the Supreme Spirit- are synonymous. This is what Krishn demonstrates again.

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः॥१८॥

[ “Such a man has neither anything to gain from action nor anything to lose from inaction, and he has no interest in any being or any object.’’ ]

Previously there was, but now there is for such a man neither any profit in doing- nor any loss in the absence of doing. He ceases to have any selfish relationship with any being. The Self is constant, eternal, unmanifest, changeless, and indestructible. When once this Soul has been known and one is joyous, contented, and absorbed in him, what else is there beyond to search for? And what shall we gain by any further seeking? For such a man there is no harm in forsaking action, because he no longer has the mind on which impieties can make an impression. He is not the least concerned with beings of the external world or with any of the layer upon layer of inner aspirations. When he has grasped the very highest, what use has he for anything else?

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।

असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः॥१९॥

[ “So always do what is right for you to do in the spirit of selflessness, for in doing his duty the selfless man attains to God.” ]

In order to achieve this state, Arjun ought to be disinterested and do well what is fit for him to do, for a selfless man realizes God only through selfless action. The action which is worthy of doing is the same as the ordained action. So to inspire Arjun to ordained action, Krishn further adds:

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि॥२०॥

[ “Since sages such as Janak had also attained to the ultimate realization by action, and keeping in mind, the preservation of the (God made) order, it is incumbent upon you to act.’’ ]

Janak here does not mean the King of Mithila. “Janak” is an epithet of father-the giver of life. Yog, the way by which the individual Soul may be united with the Supreme Spirit and thus secure absolution, is janak, for it brings out and manifests the embodied Soul. All those who are endowed with yog are sages like Janak. Many such great men possessing true wisdom have also achieved the final bliss through action aimed at the ultimate attainment. “Ultimate” stands for realization of the essence that the Supreme Spirit represents. All great saints, such as Janak, have attained to the state of ultimate realization through performance of the action which is yagya. But after attainment they act with the welfare of the world in view. They work for the betterment of mankind. So Arjun, too, is worthy of being a true leader of the people after attainment.

Krishn had only sometime back said that there was neither any gain in action nor any loss in inaction for a great Soul after he has reached the state of realization. Yet, however, keeping in mind the interest of the world and the preservation of its order, he continues to acquit himself well of his prescribed duty. The reason for this is explained in the following verse.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥२१॥

[ “Others emulate the actions of a great man and closely follow the example set by him.” ]

The man who has known his Self, and who finds joy and contentment in his embodied Soul, has nothing to gain from action nor anything to lose from inaction. But, on the other hand, there are instances of men of true attainment such as Janak and others who were assiduously engaged in action. In the following verse, Krishn also unobtrusively compares himself with those great men to suggest: “I, too, am a great Soul like them.”

**न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन।**

**नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि॥२२॥**

[ “Although, O Parth, there is no task in all the three worlds which I have to do, and neither is there any worthwhile object which I have not achieved, I am yet engaged in action.’’ ]

Like other sages of attainment, Krishn has also nothing remaining to do. He said a little earlier that sages have no duty to perform to other beings. Similarly, in all the three worlds he has nothing to do and there is not even the least desirable object that he does not have. And yet he is earnestly engaged in action.

**न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन।**

**नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि॥२२॥**

[ “For should I not be diligent in the performance of my task, O Parth, other men will follow my example in every way.’’ ]

If he is not careful about the due performance of his assigned task, other men will also behave like him. Does it mean that even emulating Krishn (God) may be an error? By his own admission, he will set a bad example if he does not act.

**उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम्।**

**संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामु- पहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः॥२४॥**

[ “If I do not perform my action well, the whole world will perish and I Shall be the cause of varnsankar and so a destroyer of mankind.’’ ]

If he does not acquit himself of his task with caution, not only will all the worlds stray, but he will also bring about varnsankar and so the destruction of all mankind. If the enlightened, accomplished sage is not cautiously engaged in meditation, society will be corrupted by imitating his example. There is no loss to the sage if he does not act because he has realized the ultimate goal by successful completion of his act of worship. But that is not true of others who have perhaps not yet even set foot on the path of this spiritual exercise. So great Souls labour for the edification and guidance of those who lag behind. Krishn is doing the same. The implication is clear that Krishn, too, was a sage-a true yogi. He works just as other sages do for the good of the world. The mind is very unstable. It desires everything except worshipful meditation. If sages who have realized God do not act, by their example people behind them will also give up action. Common people will have an excuse for licence if they find that the saint does not meditate, indulges in minor vices, and participates in cheap gossip. Disillusioned, they will withdraw from worship and fall into impiety. That explains why Krishn says that if he does not do his appointed duty, all mankind will fall from grace and he will be the cause of varnsankar.

According to Arjun, there is a destructive intermingling of disparate classes when women grow unchaste. In Chapter l, he was troubled by the fear that there would be varnsankar if women lost their virtue. But Krishn refuted him and affirmed that there would be varnsankar only if he was not assiduously engaged in his appointed task. In fact, God himself is the true varn (quality) of Self. Straying from the path that takes one to the eternal God is, therefore, the aberration called varnsankar. If the saint who has perceived God desists from performance of the worthy task, by following his example others also will

lose sight of their duties and become varnsankar, for conflicting properties of nature are then combined in them.

Women's chastity and purity of stock are features of social order-a question of rights. It is not that they have no utility for society, but it is also true that moral transgressions of parents do not affect their children's righteousness and contemplation of God. An individual obtains salvation by his own deeds. Hanuman, Vyas, Vashisht, Narad, Shukdev, Kabir, and Jesus Christ have all been saints in the true sense, but the social respectability of all of them is open to question. A Soul comes to a new body with all the merits he had earned in a previous existence. According to Krishn, the Soul discards an old body and enters into a new one with the sanskar of all the merits and demerits he had earned in a previous life through acts of his mind and senses. This sanskar of a soul has nothing to do with the physical parents of the new body. They make no difference to the development of Souls and there is, thus, no relationship between women's unchastity and the birth of varnsankar. To disintergrate and get scattered among objects of nature instead of progressing steadily towards the Supreme Spirit is varnsankar.

It is in this sense that a sage is the cause of destruction of mankind if he does not induce others to act while he is himself earnestly engaged in his prescribed task. Realization of the indestructible God, the root from which everything is born, is life, whereas to be engrossed in the innumerable objects of nature and stray from the divine path is death. So that sage who does not induce other men to walk along the path of action is a destroyer-verily a murderer, of humanity. He is a destroyer of mankind if he does not check the frittering away of minds and senses, and compel other men to keep to the right path. He is then an embodiment of violence. True nonviolence is cultivating one's own Self and, simultaneously, also urging others to spiritual discipline and growth.

According to the Geeta, physical death is only a change of perishable bodies and there is no violence in this. So Krishn tells Arjun:

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत।

कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्त- श्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम्॥२५॥

[ "As the ignorant act with a feeling of attachment to their actions, even so, O Bharat, the wise ought to act for the presentation of the (divinely) established world-order.'' ]

A wise man, selfless and endowed with spiritual knowledge, acts in order to inspire the hearts of other men to act for their good just like any selfish and ignorant man. We may be ignorant even though we know the way of and practise yagya. Knowledge is direct perception. So long as we are even in the least removed from God and he, the desired one, from us, ignorance is present. When this darkness prevails, there is attachment to action and its consequences. The selfless meditate with a devotion which is very much similar to the attachment with which the ignorant do their work. There can be no attachment in men who are unconcerned with doing, but even these sages ought to act for the good of the world and for the strengthening of forces of piety so that other men take to the right path.

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम्।

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन्॥२६॥

[ "Rather than confusing and undermining the faith of the ignorant who are attached to action, the wise man should prompt them to dwell in God and act well as he himself does.'' ]

Instead of creating confusions in the minds of the ignorant who are engaged in the performance of the said action, seers who have directly perceived God should be careful that no act of theirs should cause a weakening of other men's dedication. It is the duty of the sage,

who is blessed with sublime knowledge, to inspire others to perform the prescribed action in which he himself is so earnestly engaged.

This is why even in extreme old age my revered teacher used to wake up at two in the morning and cough to warn others that he was awake. And then he would begin to call loudly, ‘‘Get up, you earthly men.” When all of us had risen and sat down to meditate, he would himself lie down for a while. Then he would get up again and say, “Do you think I was sleeping? I have really been concentrating on my breath. I lie down because my body is old and sitting is painful for me. But you young men have to sit firm and straight and contemplate until your breathing is like the continuous, smooth flow of a stream of oil, with no break in its current and no external thought to disturb your concentration. It is the worshipper’s duty to be incessantly occupied with the task of meditation until then. As for my breath, it is steady and straight like a bamboo shoot.” This is why the sage has to act well himself, for without that he cannot induce his disciples to do the same. “A teacher should teach by example rather than precept.’’* *[*The guru (noble teacher), teaching not only by precept but by the example of his own life.]*

Thus it is the duty of a sage that while he is engaged in action himself, he should also keep other devotees engaged in meditation. A devotee should in the same way dedicate himself to worship with sincere adoration, but whether he is a follower of the Way of Knowledge or a faithful doer of selfless action, he must not allow himself to feel arrogant on account of his meditation. Krishn now deals with who the doer of action is and what the motives of action are.

**प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः।**

**अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते॥२७॥**

[ “Although all action is caused by the properties of nature, the man with an egoistic and deluded mind presumes that he himself is the doer.’’ ]

From the beginning to the moment of attainment, all action is performed because of the properties of nature, but the man whose mind is clouded with vanity thinks arrogantly that he is the doer. He takes it for granted. But how can we believe that worship of God, too, is brought about by the properties of nature. The necessary evidence is provided by Krishn.

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते॥२८॥

[ "But the wise man, who is aware of different spheres of the properties of nature in the form of mind and senses as well as of their action upon objects, is not a prey to attachment, O the mighty-armed, because he knows that the mind and senses (gun) dwell upon objects of perception (gun)." ]

Seers who have perceived the ultimate essence are aware of the distinction between the properties of nature and action, as also of the fact that these properties are preoccupied with themselves, and are disinterested in their action.

"Essence" here means the Supreme Spirit rather than the five (or twenty-five) elements or primary substances that are countable. In Krishn's words, God is the only element; besides him there is no other reality. Going across the properties of nature, the sages who dwell in God-the only reality, are enabled to perceive divisions of action according to the properties of nature. If the predominant quality or property is ignorance (tamas), it shows itself in the forms of lethargy, sleep, and wantonness-in brief, in a general disinclination to action. If the basic property is passion (rajas),the resulting action is characterized by an unwillingness to retreat from worship and a sense of authority. If the dominating property is virtue or quality of goodness (sattwa), the actions prompted by it bear such traits as concentration of mind, meditativeness,

a positive attitude towards experience, continuous thought, and simplicity. The properties of nature are mutable. So the perceptive sage alone is able to see that the excellence or otherwise of action is determined by the constituent properties. These properties effect their work through their instruments, the senses and their objects. But they who have not yet gone beyond these properties, and are still midway, are addicted to whatever they do.

**प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु।**

**तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्- कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत्॥२९॥**

[ “They ought not to undermine the faith of the deluded who are unaware of the truth, because they are enamoured of the constituents of matter and so attached to senses and their functions.” ]

Men who have an infatuation for nature get addicted to their actions when they see them gradually evolving towards the level of superior properties. Wise men who know the truth should not unsettle these deceived men who lack in both knowledge and energetic effort. Instead of disheartening them, the wise should encourage them because they can reach the ultimate state where action ceases to be only through the performance of action. After making a careful appraisal of his inborn capacity and situation, the seeker who has resolved to act by the Way of Knowledge must deem action as gifted to him by the properties of nature. If, on the contrary, he presumes that he himself is the doer, it will make him vain and conceited. Even after progressing on to superior properties he should not get addicted to them. The seeker, on the other hand, who has chosen the Way of Selfless Action, has no need to analyze the nature of action and properties of nature. He has to act only with a total self-surrender to God. In this case, it is for the God within (guru) to see which properties are making their entry and which are

departing. The seeker on the Way of Selfless Action believes everything - change in properties as well as his gradual elevation from the lower to the higher ones - to be a blessing from God. So, although he is constantly engaged in action, he neither feels the vanity of being the doer nor becomes attached to what he is doing. Referring to this as well to the nature of the war at hand, Krishn says:

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः॥३०॥

[ “So, O Arjun, contemplate the Self, surrender all your action to me, abandon all desire, pity, and grief, and be ready to fight.” ]

Arjun is told to fight, restraining his thoughts within his innermost being, surrendering in a meditative state all his deeds to the God in Krishn, and in absolute freedom from aspiration, pity, and sorrow. When a man’s thought is absorbed in contemplation, when there is not the least desire of hope anywhere, when there is no feeling of self-interest behind the act, and when there is no regret over the prospect of defeat, what kind of war can a man fight? When thought is withdrawn from all sides into the innermost spirit, against whom will he fight? And where? And who is there to fight against? In fact, however, it is only when you enter into the meditative process that the true form of war emerges. It is only then that it is known that the throng of unrighteous impulses, of desire, wrath, attraction and repulsion, and of desire and hunger, all deviations from piety, which are called kuru, are the great enemies that create attachment to the world. They obstruct the seeker of truth by launching a vicious assault. To overcome them is real war. To subdue them, to contract oneself within one’s mind, and to achieve the state of steady contemplation is real war. Krishn again stresses the point.

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः॥३१॥

[ “Unquestioning and devoted men who always act according to this precept of mine are liberated from action.” ]

Freed from illusion and possessed of feelings of adoration and self surrender, men who always act in conformity with Krishn’s precept that “one should fight” are also liberated from all action. This assurance of Yogeshwar Krishn is not for a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian, but for all of humanity. His doctrine is that one should make war. It may appear from this that this teaching is for warmongers. Fortunately there was the setup of a universal war before Arjun. But, when we are confronted by no such prospect why do we seek resolution in the Geeta or why do we so adamantly insist that the means of liberation from action is available only to fighters of a war? The truth is quite the contrary. The war, of the Geeta is that of the heart-the innermost Self. This is the war between matter and spirit, knowledge and ignorance, Dharmkshetr and Kurukshetr. The more we try to check our thought by meditation, the more the unrighteous impulses emerge as enemies and launch a terrible attack. Vanquishing their demoniacal powers and restraint of thought are at the very centre of this war of the divine song. The one who is rid of illusion and engages in the war with faith, is perfectly liberated from the bondage of action, and of birth and death. But what happens to the one who retreats from this war?

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम्।

सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः॥३२॥

[ “Know that skeptical men, who do not act in keeping with this precept of mine because they are devoid of knowledge and discrimination, are doomed to misery.’’ ]

Deluded men, drunk with attachment and lacking in discrimination, who do not follow the teaching of Krishn, or who, in other words, do not wage war in a state of meditation in which there is complete self-surrender as well as freedom from desire, self-interest, and grief, are deprived of the ultimate bliss. If this is true, why don't people invariably do so? Krishn accounts for it thus.

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति॥३३॥

[ "Since all beings are constrained to act in conformity with their natural disposition and the wise man also strives accordingly, of what avail can violence (with nature) be?" ]

All beings are dominated by their governing property and act under its compulsion. The sage who is blessed with perception also makes his efforts in accordance with his nature. Ordinary men abide in their actions and the wise in their Self. Everyone acts according to the inescapable demands of his nature. This is a self-evident and incontrovertible truth. It is for this reason that, according to Krishn, men do not follow his teaching even though they know it. Unable to overcome desire, self-interest, and sorrow, or, in other words, attachment and aversion, they fail to act in the prescribed way. Krishn also points out another reason.

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ॥३४॥

[ "Do not be ruled by attachment and aversion, because both of them are the great enemies that obstruct you on the way to good." ]

Attraction and repulsion lie within the senses and their pleasures. One should not be dominated by them because they are formidable enemies on the way that leads to good and liberation from action; they

ravish the seeker's worshipful attitude. When the enemy is within, why should one fight an external war? The enemy is in league with the senses and their objects-within the mind. So the war of the Geeta is an internal war. The human heart is the field on which there are marshalled the divine and devilish impulses - the forces of knowledge and ignorance, the two aspects of illusion. To overcome these negative forces, to destroy the devilish by fostering divine impulses, is real war. But when the unrighteous forces are annihilated, the utility of righteous impulses also comes to an end. After the Self is united with God, pious impulses too are dissolved and merge with him. To overcome nature thus is a war that can be fought only in a state of contemplation.

Destruction of feelings of attachment and aversion takes time. Many seekers, therefore, forsake meditation and suddenly take to imitating some accomplished sage. Krishn warns against this.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः॥३५॥

[ "Although inferior (in merit), one's own dharm is the best and even meeting with death in it brings good, whereas a dharm other than one's own, though well observed, generates only fear.'' ]

There is a seeker who has been engaged in worship for ten years and there is another who is being initiated into the process only today. It is but natural that the two cannot be equal. The novice will be destroyed if he imitates the experienced worshipper. It is for this reason that Krishn says that, even though deficient in quality, one's own dharm is better than another man's well-observed dharm. The ability to engage in action that arises from one's nature is one's dharm. So dying in the observance of one's own dharm is truly fortunate. After the Soul assumes a new body, he will resume his journey from the same point of spiritual attainment at which he had stopped in his last physical life. The

Soul does not die. A change of clothing does not change the mind and its thoughts. To masquerade as men who have gone ahead of him will cause the seeker only more fear. Fear is a quality of nature, not of God. The pall of nature is thickened when there is imitation.

There is abundance of cheap imitation on the "spiritual" path. My revered teacher once heard a heavenly voice telling him that he should go and live at Ansuiya* *[*A holy place in the state of India called Madhya Pradesh, the seat of Swami Adgadanand's teacher, the most exalted saint Shree Parmanand Ji. It is so called because of its association with Ansuiya, wife of the sage Atri, representing the noblest kind of chastity and wifely devotion.]*. So he travelled all the way from Jammu to Chitrakoot and began to live in the dense forests of Ansuiya. Many holy men used to pass by that way. One of them saw that although Paramhans Parmanand Ji was living all naked,he was yet held in the highest esteem. So he also at once abandoned the small strip of cloth he had been using as a loincloth, gave away his ascetic's stick and water pot to another holy man, and went about all nude. When he came back after a while, he saw that Parmanand Ji was also talking with people and even abusing them (he had a divine command that he rebuke and even condemn his disciples if necessary for the sake of their good-that he watch over the travellers on the spiritual path). In imitation of the great man, the other holy man also began to speak abusively. But people retaliated with angry and unpleasant words, and the poor impostor was left wondering why people retorted to him whereas no one spoke a word of protest to the Paramhans Ji·

When he again returned after two years, he saw Parmanand Ji sitting on a thick and soft mattress and people fanning him. So the helpless man had a wooden seat brought to the forest, got a mattress spread over it, and hired a couple of men to fan him. Crowds of people began to flock to him on Mondays when the holy man practised his "miracles:" charging fifty rupees if someone wanted a son and twenty-five

rupees for a daughter. But he had to run away within a month because he was exposed as a liar. So imitation does not help when we tread on the spiritual path. The seeker has to practise his own dharm.

What is this one's own dharm (swadharm)? In Chapter 2, Krishn had named it and told Arjun that even with his own dharm in view it was his duty to wage war. There was no more blessed a way for a Kshatriya. From the point of view of his innate property, the inherent dharm, Arjun was declared a Kshatriya. Krishn told Arjun that for the Brahmin, truly devout men possessed with knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, instruction in the Ved was like taking a bather to a mere puddle. But Arjun was urged to learn the Ved and grow into a Brahmin. In other words the inherent dharm is subject to change. However, the really significant point is that the inherent dharm is the most conducive to one's well-being. But this does not mean that Arjun should imitate a Brahmin, and dress and look like him.

The same path of action has been divided by the sage into four parts: the lowest, medium, good, and excellent. Krishn has named the seekers treading on these paths respectively Shudr, Vaishya, Kshatriya, and Brahmin. Action begins at the level of the lowest, but in the course of his spiritual quest the same seeker can evolve into a Brahmin. Further than this, when he is united with God, there remains neither Brahmin, nor Kshatriya, nor Vaishya, nor Shudr, but only pure intelligence, the eternal and changeless Supreme Spirit. He then transcends all these classes. Krishn says that he has created the four classes. But, as it was pointed out earlier, the classification was on the basis of action rather than according to birth. But what is that action which forms its basis? Is it what is usually done in and for the world? Krishn contradicts this and speaks of the ordained task or action.

As we have seen, this ordained action is the process called yagya, in which one breath is offered as sacrifice to another and all the

senses are restrained, all of which is in a true sense the practice of yog and meditation. The special exercise which takes one to the adored God is meditation. Varn are a division of this act of meditation itself into four categories. A man should begin his quest at the

level of his natural ability. This is the inherent dharm. If the seeker imitates those who are superior to and ahead of him, he will be only burdened with fear. He will not be destroyed completely, for in the spiritual enterprise the seed is indestructible. But he will be overwhelmed by terror and impoverished under the burden of material world. If a student of primary level sits in graduate classes, he cannot become a graduate although for sure he will forget even the alphabet. Why, Arjun asks, does man then not act according to his inherent dharm?

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः॥३६॥

[ “Arjun said, ‘What, O Varshneya (Krishn), is that which drives man, forced against his will as it were and with reluctance, to act impiously?’ ’’]

Why does a man, although like one who is dragged to something which he despises, act in sinful ways? Why does he not conduct himself according to the precepts laid down by Krishn? Krishn’s answer to the question is provided in the following verse.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम्॥३७॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘Know that desire arising out of the emotional property of nature (rajas) and insatiable as fire is the same as wrath; and learn to recognize it as your most wicked enemy in this world.’ ’’ ]

Desire and wrath that spring from the natural property of passion have an insatiable appetite for sensual pleasure and are the most sinful desire and wrath are the complements of attachment and repugnance. So Arjun is warned that he must regard them as his most dangerous enemies. And now their deleterious effects are dwelt upon.

**धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च।**

**यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम्॥३८॥**

[ "As fire is enveloped by smoke, a mirror clouded with dust, and a foetus hidden by the womb, even so knowledge is engulfed by desire." ]

Discrimination is obscured by the mantle of desire and wrath. If we burn damp wood, there is only smoke. There is fire, but it cannot leap into flame. A dust-covered mirror cannot give a clear image. Just so, when there exist the perversions known as desire and wrath, the mind cannot have a clear perception of God.

**आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा।**

**कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च॥३९॥**

[ "And, O son of Kunti, even wise men's discrimination is engulfed by desire, insatiable like fire and their perpetual enemy." ]

So far Krishn has named two enemies, desire and wrath, but in the thirty-ninth verse he mentions only one of them, namely, desire. In truth, the feeling of anger lies within desire. When a task is successfully completed anger subsides, but when desire is obstructed anger reappears. So anger resides at the heart of desire. It is important to know where the enemy hides, for knowing this will facilitate a total destruction of the enemy. Krishn expresses his view on the problem.

**इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते।**

**एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम्॥४०॥**

[ “Since the senses, mind, and intellect are the seats of desire, it is through them that it deludes a being by clouding-his faculty of discrimination.” ]

So we have the answer. Our worst foe dwells within our own senses, mind, and intellect. It is through them that desire envelops knowledge and deludes the embodied Soul.

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम्॥४१॥

[ “So, O the best of Bharat (Arjun), first subdue the senses and kill determinedly this desire, the heinous destroyer of both spiritual and physical knowledge.’’ ]

Above all, Arjun must control the senses because his enemy lies concealed within them. The enemy is within us and it will be futile to look for him outside. The war that has to be waged is internal; it has to be fought within the mind and heart. So Arjun must subdue his senses and kill this sinful desire which ravages both knowledge of the unmanifest Spirit and knowledge of the physical world. However, he cannot storm them directly; he has first to lay siege to the stronghold of moral perversions itself by vanquishing the senses.

But to restrain the senses and mind is most difficult. The success of this endeavour always appears doubtful. Krishn dispels this pessimistic attitude by pointing out the many weapons at his disposal which a man can use to fight against the enemy.

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः॥४२॥

[ “Above senses there is the mind and above mind there is the intellect, and the one which lies above all of them is the Soul within, supremely powerful and yet subtle.’’ ]

So man is not so helpless after all. He has an armoury of plentiful arms with which he can wage war with strength and confidence. He can use his mind against the senses, his intellect against the mind, and above all these there is his Soul, all powerful and yet unmanifest. That Soul is the real “us,” and so we are strong enough to subdue not only our senses, but also our mind and intellect.

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥४३॥

[ “Therefore, O the mighty-armed, knowing the Soul-subtle and in every respect mighty and meritorious, restrain the mind with your intellect and kill this desire, your most formidable enemy.’’ ]

Possessed of knowledge of the unmanifest and yet mighty Soul that is beyond intellect, and after a due appraisal of his innate strength and restraining the mind with his intellect, Arjun must slay desire, his worst enemy. Arjun has to kill this enemy after a proper scrutiny of his inherent capacity. Desire is a terrible foe, for it deludes the Soul through the senses. So knowing his strength and with confidence in the might of his Soul, Arjun should kill this desire-his enemy. Of course, this enemy is internal and the war to be waged against it is also internal- of the sphere of the mind and heart.

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Many loving expositors of the Geeta have given this chapter the title of “Karm Yog” (“Way of Action”), but this is not appropriate. Yogeshwar Krishn mentioned action in Chapter 2, and his elaboration of its significance created a reverent attitude towards the subject. In the present chapter Krishn has defined action as the conduct of yagya. It is certain that yagya is the ordained mode. Whatever else is done by men, besides this, is one form or another of worldly servitude. It will be

affirmed in Chapter 4 that conduct of yagya is the action which effects freedom from the material world.

The chapter describes the origin of yagya as well as what the conduct of this discipline has to offer. It then portrays the characteristic features of yagya. The importance of conducting yagya is repeatedly stressed, for this is the ordained action. They who do not practise it are not only sinful lovers of pleasure, but they also live vainly. Sages of yore had realized the state of attainment and actionlessness through yagya. They were men who had rejoiced and felt adequate in the Self. So there was left nothing more for them to do. Yet they continued to be assiduously engaged in their task for the guidance of their less fortunate fellowmen who had lagged behind. Krishn compares himself with these great Souls. He, too, is left with nothing to do and nothing to achieve, and yet he devotes himself to action for the good of mankind. Thus he reveals himself as a yogi, an ascetic or saint, engaged in constant meditation. He is indeed, as we have seen, a Yogeshwar, an adept in yog. Further, in the chapter, Krishn repeatedly cautions sages like himself that they ought not to confuse and undermine the faith of the initiated seekers, even though they may be engaged in material tasks, because they can achieve the ideal state only through action. If they stop acting, they will be destroyed. The right action requires the waging of war by concentrating on the Self and the Supreme Spirit. But what is the need of war when the eyes are closed and a man’s thought is centered on contemplation, and when the senses are all confined within the intellect? According to Krishn, when a seeker sets out on the path of worship, desire and anger, and attraction and repulsion appear as frightening hurdles in his way. To fight and overcome these negative impulses is war. Entering progressively deeper into the state of meditation by gradual elimination of the demoniacal, alien impulses of Kurukshetr is war. So this is a war which rages in the state of meditation.

This, in brief, is Chapter 3 and, as it may be seen from the attempted summary, we have not yet been told what precisely action or yagya is. When we understand the nature of yagya, we will also comprehend the nature of action.

This chapter mainly stresses the instructional role of sages, of great Souls, who have perceived reality. The chapter is thus a directive for revered teachers. They will lose nothing if they do not undertake any action and they will not gain anything for themselves if they do it. And yet they have to be active for the welfare of mankind. However, nothing of real significance has been said for seekers who wish to realize God. They are not told what they have to do for this. This chapter is, therefore, not about the Way of Action. The action which has to be undertaken has not yet been illumined. So far all that we have been told is that the conduct of yagya is the prescribed action. But, then, we are kept in dark about what yagya is. It has to be admitted, though, that the most detailed portrayal of war is found only in Chapter 3 in the whole of the Geeta.

Glancing at the Geeta as a whole, it is in Chapter 2 that Krishn exhorts Arjun to fight because the body is destructible. He should fight because the body is ephemeral. This is the only concrete reason for fighting given in the Geeta. Later while explaining the Way of Knowledge, war is said to be the only means for achieving the most auspicious end. Krishn has told Arjun that the knowledge he has imparted to him is related to the Way of Knowledge. The knowledge is that Arjun should fight because it is profitable for him in victory as well as defeat. Later, in Chapter 4, Krishn will tell Arjun that, resting firmly in yog he should sever the irresolution in his heart with the sword of discrimination. This sword is the sword of yog. There is no reference to war at all from Chapter 5 to Chapter 10. In Chapter 11, Krishn only says that the enemies have already been slain by him, so Arjun has just to stand as a proxy and earn glory. The enemies have been killed even without his killing them; and

the power which drives all beings and objects will also use him as an instrument to effect what he wishes. So Arjun should stand up boldly and kill his enemies who are nothing but living corpses.

In Chapter 15, the world will be compared to a mighty-rooted Peepal tree and Arjun will be directed to seek spiritual perfection by cleaving the tree with the axe of renunciation. There is no mention of any war in the later chapters, although in Chapter 16 there is an account of demons who are doomed to hell. The most detailed portrayal of war is thus found in Chapter 3. Verses 30 to 43 are concerned with the setup of war, its inevitability, the certain destruction of those who refuse to fight, the names of enemies who have to be killed, weighing of one's strength, and the determination to slay the enemies. The chapter thus identifies the enemies and, at the end, also provides the required encouragement to the seeker to destroy these enemies.

Thus concludes the Third Chapter, in the Upanishad of Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **"Shatru Vinash-Prerna''** or **''Urging the enemy's destruction''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Third Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 4

# Elucidation of The Deed of Yagya

In Chapter 3, Yogeshwar Krishn had given the assurance that if a man followed his precept, free from delusion and with sincere devotion, he would be liberated from the bondage of action. Yog (both of knowledge and action) has the power to effect liberation from this servitude. The idea of waging war is embodied in yog. In the present chapter he points out who the author of yog is, as well as the stages by which this discipline has evolved.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्।**

**विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥१॥**

[ "The Lord said, 'It was I who taught the eternal yog to the Sun-(Vivaswat), who then taught it to Manu, who taught it to Ikshwaku.' '' ]

It was he, Krishn says, who at the beginning of devotion (kalp), imparted the knowledge of eternal yog to the Sun (symbolizing righteous impulses), from whom it was passed on to Manu (symbolizing mind), son and then to Ikshwaku (symbolizing aspiration). Krishn, as we have seen, was a yogi. So it is a yogi, a sage dwelling in the Supreme Spirit, who initiates the everlasting yog at the beginning or, in other words, at the commencement of worship and transmits it into the life breath. The Sun represents the way of God-realization* *[*In the Upanishad Prashn we find this: "The wise know him who assumes all forms, who is radiant, who is omniscient, and who is*

*the one light that gives light to all. He rises as the sun of a thousand rays and abides in infinite places."]*. God is the "one light that gives light to all.''

Yog is everlasting. Krishn has said earlier that the inception, the seed, of this process is indestructible. If it is but begun, it does not cease until it has achieved perfection. The body is cured by medicines, but worship is the remedy for the Soul. The beginning of worship is the beginning of Self-cure. This act of devotion and meditation is also the creation of an accomplished sage. To the primitive man lying unconscious in the night of ignorance, who has not given a thought to yog, is brought to the perfection of yog when he meets with a sage-just by looking at the great man, by listening to his voice, by rendering albeit an inadequate service to him, and by associating with him. Goswami Tulsidas has also said this: "Ultimate bliss is granted to the man who has perceived God as well as to the man who has been noticed by God."

Krishn says that at the beginning he taught yog to the Sun. If a realized sage just casts a glance at a devotee, the refinement of yog is transmitted into the life-breath of the lucky Soul. All beings that live are animated by the sun-by God who is subject to himself alone. Since light is life or breath, it is ordained that the Supreme Spirit can be attained only by the regulation of life-breath. Transmission of pious instincts into early man is the imparting of knowledge of yog to the Sun, after which in due time the seed of this perfection sprouts in the mind. This is how gods pass on the knowledge to Manu. After the seed has sprouted in the mind, there will arise a wish for the realization of the sage's utterance. If the mind has something in it, there is also the desire to achieve it. This is Manu's preaching yog to Ikshwaku. There will be a longing, or aspiration to do that ordained act which is eternal and which liberates from the bondage of action. If it is so, there is the will to act and worship is quickened. Krishn now speaks about the point to which yog takes us after it has been set in motion.

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः।

स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥२॥

[ “Derived from tradition, this yog was known to sages of the royal stage (rajarshi*) *[*Readers need to be warned against a common misunderstanding about the word rajarshi. It is said that a Kshatriya is elevated to the status of rajarshi by dint of his pious life and austere devotion just as a Brahmin is raised to the position of a brahmarshi. But in truth God has made neither Brahmin nor Kshatriya, and neither Jew nor Christian. These are only social orders, based on birth or occupation. So rajarshi is used here to denote one of the four spiritual states which are distinguished only by the inner merits of a worshipper irrespective of his caste or creed. Such an interpretation is correct, for otherwise the yog of Geeta has to be assumed as meant for only members of one caste which is untenable.]*, but at this point, O the destroyer of foes, it declined and was almost extinct.’’ ]

This yog, transmitted by an accomplished saint into the breath of the primitive, barbaric man, and thereafter flowing from breath into the mind, thence to longing (or aspiration), and from that to active practice, thus developing by gradual stages, reaches the royal stage and is then revealed to the seeker. Extraordinary powers are generated in worshippers who have reached this level. At this critical stage, yog almost ceases to be in this world (body). So the problem is how to carry it beyond this dividing line. It seems that every seeker is destroyed after reaching this stage, but according to Krishn it is not so. One who has taken refuge in him as a loved devotee and dear friend is spared.

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥३॥

[ “That is the timeless yog which I now impart to you, because you are my devotee and beloved friend, and because this yog embodies a supreme mystery.’’ ]

Arjun is a Kshatriya worshipper, of the level of rajarshi at which, lashed by waves of achievement, worshippers are in danger of being destroyed. It is not that the beneficial nature of yog is cancelled at this stage, but worshippers usually stumble after arriving at this point. That eternal and supremely mysterious yog Krishn now imparts to Arjun, because his disciple is in the same way on the brink of destruction. And he does this because Arjun is devoted to him, single-mindedly reliant upon him, and a beloved friend.

When the God we crave for-the accomplished sage-abides in the Soul and begins to instruct him, only then does real worship begin. Here God and the accomplished sage- teacher, as prompters, are synonymous. If God descends into the heart at the level at which we stand, begins to check and guide, and support in case the worshipper stumbles-only then is the mind fully restrained. Unless God stands by as a charioteer, close to the Soul as a prompter, there cannot be an adequate initiation to his path. Before this the adorer is on trial; he has not yet achieved the state of true worship.

My revered teacher-my God, used to say, “Ha! I had many a narrow escape. But God saved me. God taught me this... told me that...’’ I sometimes asked, “Maharaj Ji, does God also speak and talk?” Thereupon he would say: “Ho, God talks exactly like you and me, for hours, and without stopping.” This made me sad and I wondered how God speaks. This was an amazing revelation to me. After a while Maharaj Ji would say, ”Why do you worry? God will also speak to you.” Now I realize that every word of what he said is true. This is the sentiment of friendship that binds the individual Soul with the Cosmic Spirit. When God begins to resolve doubts like a friend, only then can the worshipper cross the destructive stage safely.

So far Yogeshwar Krishn has dealt with the inception of yog by a sage, the obstacles in its way, and the means of overcoming them. But Arjun now asks him :

अर्जुन उवाच

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः।

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥४॥

[ “Arjun said, ‘Since Vivaswat (craving for God) was born in the distant antiquity and your birth is only recent, how am I to believe that you had taught yog to him?’ ” ]

Krishn has had a recent birth, in remembered time, whereas the breath of knowledge he claims to have transmitted to the Sun belongs to “the dark backyard and abyss of time.” So how is Arjun to believe that Krishn is the one who had enunciated yog at the beginning? Krishn resolves the doubt thus:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥५॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘O Arjun, you and I have passed through innumerable births but, O vanquisher of foes, whereas you do not have memory of your previous births, I do.’ ”]

Krishn and Arjun have had numerous births, but the latter does not remember them. The worshipper does not know. But he who has beheld his Self knows it and one who has realized the unmanifest knows it. According to Krishn, his birth is unlike that of others.

Attainment of the Self is distinct from attainment of a body. Krishn’s manifestation cannot be seen with physical eyes. He is birthless, hidden, and eternal, and yet he is born with a human body. Therefore,

they who preach that death of the physical body brings liberation offer, but, a false consolation.

A Soul realizes the ultimate essence while he is yet in his assumed human body. If there is even the slightest flaw, he has to undergo another birth. Till now Arjun has thought Krishn to be a mortal like him. That is why he speaks of his recent birth. Is Krishn like other bodies?

**अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।**

**प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥६॥**

[ "Although imperishable, birthless, and God of all beings, I manifest myself subduing the materialistic world of nature by the mysterious power of atm-maya.'' ]

Krishn is imperishable, birthless, and pervading the breath of all beings, but he is manifested when he restrains materialistic attachments by atm-maya* *[*In Ram Charit Manas, the devotional retelling and translation of thirty other Indian epics, the Ramayan, by the great poet Tulsidas, Goswami Tulsidas has defined maya thus: "Whereas I and these are mine, you and those are yours." This notion is maya, of which all creatures are victims. It is twofold, made up first of ignorance and then of enlightenment. The first is a notorious rogue because it entraps every creature in the pitfalls of birth and death. On the contrary, although the other is reputed as the only fountain of virtues, it is wholly animated by the God within and has no power of its own. The process of enlightenment is called vidya-maya. Since it unites the individual Soul with the Infinite, it is also named yog-maya. And because it enables the Soul to attain to his highest glory, it is also known as atm-maya. After accomplishment a yogi is blessed with the power that enables him to look after thousands of his disciples at once. This power, called atm-maya, is the one that is used here.]*. One kind of maya is the moral ignorance that makes one accept the reality of the material world, and which is the cause of rebirth in low and inferior forms. The other maya is that which Krishn calls yog-maya, of which we are unaware. This is the maya of Self that provides access to the Soul and leads to awareness of the Supreme

Spirit. It is by the operation of this yog-maya that Krishn subdues his three-propertie nature and manifests himself.

People usually say that they will have a vision of God when he manifests himself through an incarnation. According to Krishn, however, there is no such incarnation as may be seen by others. God is not born in a corporal form. It is only by gradual stages that he controls his three-propertied nature by the exercise of yog-maya and manifests himself. But what are the circumstances of such manifestation?

**यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।**

**अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥**

[ “Whenever, O Bharat, righteousness (dharm) declines and unrighteousness is rampant, I manifest myself.” ]

Krishn tells the devout Arjun that when hearts fall into inertia in regard to the Supreme Spirit, the most sublime dharm, and when the pious are unable to see how to cross safely to the other bank, he begins to shape his form in order to manifest himself. Such a feeling of weariness had come to Manu. Goswami Tulsidas has written of his grief-laden heart because his life had passed without contemplation of God. When despairing tears flow from the eyes of loving worshippers because of their overpowering feeling of helplessness at their inability to steer across unrighteousness, God begins to mould his form into a manifest shape. But that also implies that God manifests himself to only loving worshippers and only for their well-being.

God’s incarnation comes about only within the heart of a blessed worshipper. But what does the manifest God do?

**परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।**

**धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥८॥**

[ “I manifest myself from age to age to defend the pious, destroy the wicked, and strengthen dharm.” ]

God manifests himself as a saviour of saintly men. He, the adored, is the one God after attaining whom there is nothing else to contemplate. Krishn assumes a manifest form from age to age to destroy impediments that obstruct the smooth flow of righteous impulses such as wisdom, renunciation and restraint, as also to annihilate the demoniacal forces of passion, anger, attachment and repugnance, and to reinforce dharm.

“Age”, as used by Krishn here, does not refer to historical ages like the Golden Age (Satyug) or the Iron Age (Kaliyug). It rather alludes to the stages of rise and fall, of the waxing and waning, of dharm through which human nature has to pass. These are stages of dharm and the human heart has to progress through them. Goswami Tulsidas has written about it in Ram Charit Manas (7. 10).- the devotional retelling and translation of the Indian epic, Ramayan from Sanskrit into the language of the people by the poet Tulsidas. The stages of dharm undergo variation in every heart at all times, not because of ignorance but because of the operation of the divine power of maya. This is what has been named atm-maya in the sixth verse of the chapter. Inspired by God, this knowledge is the one which makes the heart a veritable dwelling of God. But how can one know through which Stage one is passing at the moment? When virtue and moral goodness (sattwa) alone are active in the heart, when passion and ignorance have subsided, when all fears are stilled, when there is no feeling of repulsion, when there is the necessary strength to rest firmly on the signals that are received from the desired goal, when the mind is overflowing with happiness-then alone is one enabled to enter into the Golden Age. On the other hand, when the forces of darkness (tamas), combined with passion and moral blindness (rajas), are sweeping through, when there are animosities and conflicts

all around, the worshipper is passing through the Iron Age (Kaliyug). When there is predominance of ignorance and abundance of lethargy, slumber and procrastination, that is the stage of the Kaliyug of dharm. The man passing through this stage does not do his duty even though he knows it. He knows what he is forbidden to do, and yet he does it. These stages of dharm, of its ascent and descent, are determined by innate properties. These stages are the four ages (yug) according to some, the four classes (varn) according to others, and the four levels of spiritual seeking-excellent, good, medium, and low-according to yet others. In all the stages God stands by the worshipper. Nevertheless, there is a plenty of divine favour at the highest stage, whereas the assistance appears to be meagre at the lower stages.

So Krishn tells Arjun that a worshipper who is earnestly devoted to his ultimate goal is a sage, but he can be saved only when the flow of divine impulses such as wisdom, renunciation, and self-restraint, which provide access to the object, is unimpeded. Similarly, doers of wicked deeds are not undone just by the destruction of their nonexistent mortal bodies, because they will be reborn with the same wicked impressions (sanskar) they had earned in the previous life, and do the same evil which they had done before. So Krishn manifests himself in all ages to destroy moral perversions and to strengthen dharm. Installation of the one changeless God alone is the final destruction of evil.

In brief, Krishn has said that he manifests himself again and again, in all circumstances and categories, to destroy evil and foster good, and to strengthen faith in the Supreme Spirit. But he does this only if there is profound regret in the worshippers' heart. So long as the grace of the worshipped God is not with us, we cannot even know whether evil has been destroyed or how much of it still remains. From the beginning to the moment of final attainment, God stays by the worshipper at all stages. He manifests himself only in the devotee's heart. Doesn't

everyone see him when he manifests himself? According to Krishn it is not so.

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥९॥

[ "He who has perceived the essence of my radiant incarnations and works, O Arjun, is never born again after discarding his body, but dwells in me.'' ]

God's incarnation, his gradual manifestation through profound remorse, and his works-eradication of hindrances which generate evil, provision of the essentials of Self-realization, and reinstatement of dharm- are not like the birth and deeds of mortals. Perceived only as abstractions, God's incarnation and operations cannot be seen with physical eyes. He cannot be measured by mind and wisdom. God, so inscrutable and mysterious, is perceptible only to him who has known the reality. Only he can view God's incarnation and works, and once he has made this direct perception, he is not born again but dwells in Krishn.

When seers alone can see God's incarnation and works, why do we have these crowds of hundreds of thousands of men awaiting the birth of God so that they can see him? Are we all seers? There are many who masquerade as sages, mainly by dressing as holy men, and who claim that they are incarnations, and whose agents resort to publicity to prove it. The credulous rush like sheep to have a view of these "God-men," but Krishn affirms that only men of perfection can see God. Now, who is this man we call a seer?

Giving his verdict on the real and the false in Chapter 2, Krishn told Arjun that the unreal has no being and that the real has never been nonexistent in all time-past, present and future. This has been the experience of seers rather than of linguists or wealthy men. Now he reiterates that although God manifests himself, only perceivers of

essence can see him. He has been united with the ultimate reality and become a seer. We do not become seers by learning to count the five (or twenty-five) elements. Krishn further says that the Soul alone is the ultimate reality. When the Soul is united with this Universal Spirit, he too becomes God. So only a man who has realized the Self can see and comprehend God's manifestation. It is evident therefore that God manifests himself in a worshippers's heart. At the outset the worshipper is not able to recognize the power which transmits signals to him. Who is showing him the way? But after he has perceived the truth of the Supreme Spirit, he begins to see and understand, and thereafter when he discards the body he is not reborn.

Krishn has said that his manifestation is internal, obscure, and luminous, and that the one who sees his radiance becomes one with him. But instead of this people have made his idols which they worship; and they imagine that he dwells somewhere in heaven. But this is far from the truth. Krishn only means by this that if men do the ordained task, they will find that they too are radiant. What others have the potential to be, Krishn already is. He represents the possibilities of mankind-their future. The day we achieve perfection within ourselves, we will also be what Krishn is; we will be identical with him. Incarnation is never external. If a heart is brimming with love and adoration, there is a possibility of its experiencing the divine incarnation. All the same Krishn provides solace to the common people by telling them that many have realized him by treading on the ordained path.

**वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः।**

**बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥१०॥**

[ "Free from passion and anger, wholly dedicated to me, finding shelter in me, and purified by knowledge and penance, many have realized my being.'' ]

Many who have taken refuge in Krishn- with single-mindedness and complete detachment, freed equally from passion and passionlessness, fear and fearlessness, anger and absence of anger, and purified by knowledge and penance, have attained to his state. It is not that only now it is so. This canon has always been in operation. Many have attained to his state before. But what is the way? Krishn shapes himself and appears in a heart that is filled with profound sorrow at the predominance of unrighteousness. It is people with such hearts who realize him. What Yogeshwar Krishn had previously called perception of reality he now calls knowledge (gyan). God is the ultimate reality. To perceive him is wisdom. Men with this knowledge therefore realize him. Here the problem is resolved and Krishn now proceeds to distinguish worshippers according to their qualities.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥११॥

[ "O Parth, as men worship me, even so do I accept them, and knowing this the wise follow me in every way.'' ]

Krishn rewards his worshippers according to the nature of their devotion; he assists them in the same degree. It is the worshipper's dedication that is returned to him as grace. Knowing this secret, the righteous conduct themselves with single-mindedness according to the way laid down by him. They who are dear to him act according to his way. They do what he ordains them to do.

God shows his favour by standing with the worshipper as a charioteer; he begins to walk along with the worshipper and manifest his glory. This is the form of his loving care. He stands up for the destruction of forces that generate wickedness and to protect righteous impulses that provide access to reality. Unless the worshipped God acts as the earnest charioteer who alerts at every step, despite his dedication and

closing his eyes in meditation, and all other endeavours, the worshipper cannot cope with the adversities of the material world successfully. How is he to know how much distance he has covered and how much more remains to be covered? The adored God stands inseparably with the Self and guides him: that he is now at this point, that he should do this, and walk like that. Thus the gulf of nature is gradually bridged and, guiding the Soul ahead by gradual steps, God at last enables him to merge into him. Worship and adoration have to be performed by the devotee, but the distance on the path which is covered by the devotee is only by God's grace. Knowing this, men who are pervaded by divine sentiment through and through follow Krishn's precept. But they do not always do this in the right way.

**काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः।**

**क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥१२॥**

[ "Desiring fruits of their action, men worship manifold gods, for the rewards of action are then earned quickly." ]

Desiring accomplishment of the action within this human body, men take to the worship of many gods. -that is, they cultivate the several righteous impulses. Krishn has told Arjun to perform the ordained action, which is performance of yagya, a way of worship, in which the incoming and outgoing life-breaths are offered to God as oblation and the outward-looking senses are burnt out in the fire of self-restraint, and whose final outcome is the attainment of God. The true meaning of action is worship and this is again clarified later in this chapter. The outcome of this action is oneness with the eternal God, the supreme goal: the state of total actionlessness. Krishn says that men who follow his way, worship gods for the attainment of actionlessness, that is, they strengthen the divine impulses within.

Krishn said in Chapter 3 that Arjun ought to practise yagya to foster gods-to strengthen his righteous impulses. He will progress more and more as these impulses are gradually strengthened and augmented. Thus, advancing step by step, he will at last achieve the ultimate bliss. This is the final stage of the process of spiritual advancement that has to be gone through from the beginning to the end. Stressing the point, Krishn says that they who follow him, even though aspiring for accomplishment of action in their human bodies, tend the righteous impulses which quicken the advent of the state of actionlessness. Never failing, the process invariably succeeds. What is the meaning of "quickly" or "soon" here? Is it that no sooner do we commence action that we are rewarded with the final achievement? According to Krishn, it is decreed that this height can be only gradually conquered, moving step by step. No one can leap across to the summit at once and bring about a miracle like the revelations that teachers of divinity nowadays claim for abstract meditation. Let us now see how it is.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥१३॥

[ "Although I have created the four classes (varn )-Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudr-according to innate properties and actions, know me the immutable as a non-doer.'' ]

Krishn represents himself as the maker of the four classes. Does it mean that he has divided men into four rigid categories determined by birth? The truth is rather that he has divided actions into four classes on the basis of inherent properties. All the same, as he tells Arjun, he-the imperishable God-is a non-agent and should be known as such. The innate property (gun) of a being or of a thing is a measure, a yardstick. If the dominant property is that of ignorance or darkness (tamas), it will result in an irresistible inclination to laziness, excessive sleep,

wantonness, aversion to work, and compulsive addiction to evil in spite of the realization that it is evil. How can worship commence in such a state 'We sit' and worship for two hours and we try to do it with the utmost earnestness, and yet we fail to secure even ten minutes that are truly propitious. The body is still and quiet, but the mind which should be really quiet soars aloft weaving webs of fancies. Waves upon waves of speculation toss it. Then why do we sit idly in the name of meditation and waste time? The only remedy at this stage is it dedicate ourselves to the service of wise men who dwell in the unmanifest and of those who have gone ahead of us on the path. This will subdue negative impressions and strengthen thoughts that are conducive to worship.

Gradually, with the diminishing of forces of darkness and ignorance, there is the growing sway of the quality of rajas, and a partial awakening of the property of good and moral virtue (sattwa) as well, because of which the worshipper's ability is elevated to the Vaishya level. Then the same worshipper begins spontaneously to imbibe qualities such as control of the senses and to accumulate other virtuous impulses. Proceeding further on the path of action, he is endowed with the wealth of righteousness. The property of rajas now grows faint and tamas is dormant. At this stage of development the worshipper steps on to the Kshatriya level. Prowess, the ability to be immersed in action, unwillingness to retreat, mastery over feelings, the capacity to carve his way through the three properties of nature-are now the inherent features of the worshipper's disposition. With yet further refinement of action, sattwa makes its approach, at which there is the evolution of virtues such as control of the mind and senses, concentration, innocence, contemplation and abstract meditation, and faith as well the capacity to hear the voice of God-all qualities that provide access to Him. With the emergence of these qualities the worshipper comes to belong to the Brahmin class. This, however, is the lowest stage of worship at this level.

When ultimately the worshipper is united with God, at that point-the highest point-he is neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshatriya, nor a Vaishya, nor a Shudr. So worship of God is the only action-the ordained action. And it is this one action that is divided into four stages according to the motivating properties. The division was made, as we have seen, by a saint—by a Yogeshwar. A sage dwelling in the unmanifest was the maker of this division. Yet Krishn tells Arjun to regard him, the indestructible and maker of varn, as a non-doer. How can it be so?

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा।

इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥१४॥

[ ‘‘I am unsullied by action because I am not attached to it, and they who are aware of this are in the like fashion unfettered by action.’’ ]

Krishn is unattached to the fruits of action. He said before that the deed by which yagya is accomplished is action, and that the one who tastes the nectar of wisdom generated by yagya merges into the changeless, eternal God. So the final consequence of action is attainment of the Supreme Spirit himself. And Krishn has overcome even the desire for God because he has become identical with Him. So he is also unmanifest like God. There is now no power beyond for which he should strive. So he is untouched by action, and they who know him from the same level, from the level of God realization, are also not bound by action. Such are the realized sages who have reached the level of Krishn’s accomplishment.

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः।

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥१५॥

[ “Since it is with this wisdom that men aiming at salvation from worldly existence have also performed action in earlier times, you too should follow the example of your predecessors.’’ ]

In the past, too, men desiring salvation had acted with the same realization: that the patterns of action are severed when as the final outcome of his action the doer is one with God, and when he is liberated from desire even for him. Krishn belongs to this state. So he is untainted by action and, if we have what he has, we too will be freed from the bonds of action. Whoever knows what Krishn knows from his elevated position will be freed from action. So whatever Krishn might have been, the unmanifest God or an enlightened sage, his attainment is within the reach of all of us. It was with this kind of wisdom that earlier men aspiring for salvation had set upon the path of action. It is for this reason that Arjun is told to do what his predecessors have done. This is the only way that leads to the sublime good.

So far Krishn has stressed the performance of action, but he has not yet explained what this action is. He only mentioned it in Chapter 2 and told Arjun to listen to him on selfless action. He described its special features, one of which is that it gives protection against the terrible fear of birth and death. He then dwelt upon the precautions that have to be observed in its performance. But despite all this he has not pointed out what action is. He later added, in Chapter 3, that, whether one prefers the Way of Knowledge or the Way of Selfless Action, action is a necessity in each case. One becomes neither wise by renouncing action nor emancipated from action by just not undertaking it. They who suppress their organs of action with violence are just arrogant hypocrites. So Arjun should act, restraining his senses with the mind. Krishn told him to do the ordained action, which is performance of yagya, to clarify the meaning of action. And now in this chapter he has told Arjun that even scholars of great erudition are confounded by the problems of what action is and what actionlessness is. So it is important that action and actionlessness are understood well.

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः।

तते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥१६॥

[ "Even wise men are confused about the nature of action and actionlessness, and so I shall explain the meaning of action to you well, so that knowing it you may be emancipated from evil.'' ]

What are action and the state in which there is no action? Even men of learning are confounded by these questions. So Krishn tells Arjun that he is going to expound well the meaning of action to him, so that he can be freed from worldly bondage. He has already said that action is something that liberates from the fetters of temporal life. Now, again, he stresses the importance of knowing what it is.

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥१७॥

[ "It is essential to know the nature of action as well as of actionlessness, and also that of meritorious action, for the ways of action are (So) inscrutable." ]

It is of the utmost importance to know what action is and what actionlessness is, as also the action which is free from all doubt and ignorance and which is undertaken by men of wisdom who have renounced all worldly desire and attachment. This is imperative because the problem of action is a great riddle. Some commentators have interpreted the word ''vikarm'' in the text (which has been translated here as "meritorious action") as "forbidden or prohibited action" and "diligent action," etc. But the preposition vi* *[*Not only here but in the whole of the Geeta, wherever the preposition ''vi'' is prefixed to a root, it denotes excellence.]* prefixed to the root karm here denotes merit or excellence. The action of men who have attained to the ultimate bliss is free from all uncertainty and error. For sages who dwell and find contentment in the Self, and love him and the

Supreme Spirit, there is neither any profit in accomplishing action nor any loss in forsaking it. But they yet act for the good of those who are behind them. Such action is pure and it is free from all doubt and ignorance.

We have just seen "meritorious action." So we are now left with action and actionlessness. They are explained in the next verse, and if we do not understand the distinction between the two here, we will perhaps never understand it.

**कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः।**

**स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥१८॥**

[ "One who can perceive non-action in action and action in non-action is a wise man and an accomplished doer of perfect action." ]

Action means worship; and the accomplished doer is one who sees non-action in action, that is, who contemplates God and yet believes simultaneously that rather than being the doer, he has only been prompted to action by his inherent properties. Only when this ability to see non-action has been mastered and the continuity of action is unbroken, should one believe that action is proceeding in the right direction. The man with this insight is a wise man. verily a yogi, endowed with the means by which the individual Soul is united with the Supreme Spirit, and a doer of perfect action. There is not even the slightest error in his performance of action.

Briefly, then, worship is action. A man should practise it and yet see non-action in it, that is, realize that he is just an instrument while the real doer is the underlying property. When we know that we are non-doers and there is yet constant and unimpeded action, only then is made possible the performance of that action which results in the ultimate good. My noble teacher, the revered Maharaj Ji, used to say to us, "Until God runs into a charioteer to restrain and guide, real worship does not

begin." Whatever is done before this stage is no more than a preliminary attempt to be admitted to the way of action. The whole weight of the yoke rests on the oxen and yet the ploughman is the one who drives them, and the ploughing of the field is said to be his accomplishment· Even so although all the burden of worship is borne by the worshipper, the real worshipper is God because he is always by the devote, urging and guiding him. Until God delivers his judgement, we cannot even know what has been done through us. Are we yet settled in the Supreme Spirit or are we just roaming about in the wilderness of nature? The worshipper who thus goes ahead on the spiritual path under God's guidance, and who acts with constant belief that he is a non-doer, is truly wise; he knows the reality and he is indeed a yogi. However, is the worshipper to go on acting for ever or will there ever be a point of respite? Yogeshwar Krishn speaks about this next.

But, before we come to the next verse, let us recall briefly, for the sake of better understanding, what Krishn has said about action and yagya, so far. What is usually done in the name of action, he has said, is not action. Action is a prescribed undertaking-the performance of yagya. Whatever else besides it is done is not action. According to Krishn anything apart from this that is done is worldly bondage rather than action. From what Krishn has spoken about the nature of yagya, it is evident that it is a particular mode of worship which guides the devotee to the adored God and effects his dissolution in Him.

For the performance of this yagya one has to subdue the senses, control the mind, and augment pious impulses. Concluding this part of the argument, Krishn said that many yogis depend upon serenity of breath during silent recitation of the deity's name by restraining the life-winds, in which state there is neither internal volition nor coming into the mind of any desire from the external environment. In such a state of total restraint of the mind, when even the restrained mind is dissolved,

the worshipper merges into the changeless, eternal God. This is yagya, the performance of which is action. Therefore, the true meaning of action is "worship;" it means divine adoration and practice of yog. And this is what is treated at length later in the chapter under review. So far only a distinction has been made between action and non-action, the awareness of which will guide the worshipper on to the right path and enable him to tread effectively on it.

**यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः।**

**ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥१९॥**

[ "Even the learned call that man a sage all of whose actions are free from desire and will, (both) burnt to ashes by the fire of knowledge.'' ]

It was said in the last verse that with the acquisition of the capacity of perceiving non-action in action, the man who is engaged in action grows into a doer of perfect action in which there is not even the slightest flaw. Now it is added that restraint of desire and will is a victory of the mind. So action is something that elevates the mind above desire and will. Krishn tells Arjun that a well-commenced action gradually becomes so refined and sublimated that it takes the mind above will as well as irresolution and then, with the burning out of even the last desire which he does not know but which he was previously eager to know, the worshipper is blessed with direct perception of God. Direct knowledge of God by following the path of action is called knowledge (gyan): the sacred knowledge that enables the Soul to be united with the Supreme Spirit. The fire of this direct perception of God annihilates action for ever. What was sought has been achieved. There is nothing beyond it to quest for. Who is there beyond God to search for with further endeavour? So with the attainment of this wisdom, the need for action comes to an end. Rightly have sages called men with such wisdom pandit, men of

profound erudition. Their learning is perfect. But what does such a saint do? How does he live? Krishn now illumines his way of life.

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किंचित्करोति सः ॥२०॥

[ ''Independent of the world, ever contented, and renouncing all attachment to action as well as its fruits, such a man is free from action even while he is engaged in it. '' ]

Declining to rest upon objects of the world, utterly contented with dwelling in the eternal God, and discarding not only desire for the fruits of action but even attachment to God because now he is not removed from Him, this sage is a non-doer even while he is diligently employed in the performance of action.

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥२१॥

[ "He who has conquered his mind and senses, and given up all objects of sensual pleasure, does not partake of sin even when his body seems to be engaged in action.'' ]

It is only the physical body of the man, who has overcome both his mind and senses, renounced all objects of worldly enjoyment, and achieved total freedom from desire, that seems to be engaged in action, whereas, in truth, he does nothing, and that is why he does not incur sin. He is perfect and so he is emancipated from the cycle of birth and death.

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥२२॥

[ "Contented with what comes to him unsought, he who is indifferent to happiness and sorrow, free from envy, and even-minded in success and

failure, is a man of equanimity, unenslaved by action even when he performs it.” ]

When a man is contented with whatever comes to him without being desired or asked for, indifferent to happiness and sorrow, and love and animosity, free from any negative feeling, and abiding with equanimity in attainment and nonattainment, he is not fettered by action even though he appears to be engaged in it. Since the goal he had aimed at is now achieved and it will not ever desert him, he is freed from the terror of defeat. Looking alike at achievement and non-achievement this man acts, but without infatuation. And what he does is nothing other than yagya, the act of supreme sacrifice. Reiterating the concept, Krishn adds:

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः।

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥२३॥

[ “When a man is free from attachment, his mind rests firmly in the knowledge of God, and when his actions are like the yagya made to God, he is truly emancipated and all his actions cease to be.’’ ]

Performance of yagya itself is action and direct perception of God is knowledge. Acting in the spirit of sacrifice and dwelling in the knowledge achieved from direct perception of God, all the actions of this liberated man who is devoid of attachment and desire undergo a process of dissolution. Now his actions are of no consequence to the worshipper, because God, the goal he had striven for, is no longer away from him. Now, what other fruit will grow from a fruit? Therefore, such liberated men’s need of action for themselves comes to an end. Yet they act as messiahs, but even while doing this they remain untouched by what they do. Krishn accounts for this in the following verse :

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम्।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥२४॥

[ “Since both the dedication and the oblation itself are God, and it is the Godlike teacher who offers the oblation to the fire which is also God, the attainment, too, of the man whose mind is set on Godlike action is God himself.” ]

The emancipated man’s yagya is God, what he offers as oblation is God, and the sacred fire to which the sacrifice is made is also God. That is to say that what is offered by the Godlike worshipper to the sacred fire that is an embodiment of God is also God himself.

That which is worthy of being secured by the man whose actions have been dissolved and stilled by God’s loving touch is also God. So this man does nothing; he only acts for the good of others.

These are attributes of the realized sage who has reached the stage of final attainment. But what is the nature of yagya that is performed by worshippers who have just set out on the quest ? Krishn exhorted Arjun in the last chapter to perform the ordained action. Elaborating on what this ordained action is, he said that it is performance of yagya. (3.9) Anything apart from this that is done by mortals is only bondage. But action in the true sense provides freedom from fetters of the world. So Arjun was told to rid himself of attachment and act in the spirit of renunciation for the accomplishment of yagya. In doing so, however, Yogeshwar Krishn raised a new question: What is yagya and how to perform it in the due manner? Thereafter he elucidated the characteristic features of yagya, its origin, and the profit that ensues from it. So the characteristic features of yagya, were dwelt upon. But it is only now that the meaning of yagya is explained.

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते।

ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥२५॥

[ “Some yogis perform yagya to foster divine impulses, whereas some other yogis offer the sacrifice of yagya to (a seer who is) the fire of God.”]

In the last verse Krishn portrayed the sacrifice made by sages who have made their abode in the Supreme Spirit. But he now depicts the yagya performed by worshippers who wish to be initiated into yog. These novices undertake sincere performance of yagya to gods to foster them, that is, they strengthen and augment divine impulses in the heart. Here it is useful to remember how Brahma had directed mankind to foster gods by yagya. The more virtues there are cultivated and garnered in the heart, the more the worshipper advances towards the ultimate excellence until he at last attains it. The novice worshipper’s yagya is thus aimed at strengthening the forces of righteousness in his heart.

A detailed account of the divine treasure of righteousness is given in the first three verses of Chapter 16. Righteous impulses lie dormant in all of us and it is an important duty to cherish and wake them up. Pointing this out, Yogeshwar Krishn tells Arjun not to grieve because he is endowed with these godly merits. With them he will dwell in Krishn and attain to his eternal being, because righteousness brings the ultimate good. On the contrary, there are the demoniacal, devilish forces which lead the soul to rebirth in low and inferior forms; It is these negative impulses that are offered as oblation to fire. This is yagya and also its inception.

Other yogis perform yagya by offering sacrifice to the accomplished teacher in his heart-the sacred fire that is an embodiment of God. Krishn further adds that in the human body he is the adhiyagya or that in whom the oblation is consumed. Krishn too was a yogi and an accomplished teacher. These other yogi offer oblations to the Godlike teacher who also annihilates evils like fire. They perform sacrifices aimed at this accomplished teacher who is also an embodiment of sacrifice. In

brief, they concentrate their minds on the form of the accomplished teacher, a realized sage.

**श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति।**

**शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥२६॥**

[ "While some offer their hearing and other senses as sacrifice to the fire of self-restraint, others offer speech and other sense objects to the fire of the senses.'' ]

Yet other yogi offer all their senses of action-ear, eye, skin, tongue, and nose-to the fire of self-control, that is, they subdue their senses by withdrawing them from their objects. There is no real fire in this case. As everything cast into fire is reduced to ashes, even so the fire of restraint destroys the outward looking senses. There are then yogi who offer all their senses of perception, sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, to the fire of senses; they sublimate their desires and thus turn them into effective means for achievement of the supreme goal.

After all, the worshipper has to carry on his task in this world itself, assaulted all the while by good as well evil utterances of people around him. No sooner than he hears words that arouse passion, however, he sublimates them into the feeling of renunciation and thus burns them in the fire of the senses. It happened so once with Arjun himself. He was engaged in contemplation when all of a sudden his ears were thrilled by lilting melody. When he looked up he saw Urvashi* *[*One of the celestial maidens, described by the King of Death in the Kathopanishad as most beautiful to behold and such indeed as is not meant for mortals.]*, the, heavenly courtesan, standing before him. All the other men were enthralled by her sensual charm, but Arjun saw her with filial sentiment as mother. The voluptuous music thus grew faint in his mind and was buried in his senses.

Here we have the fire of the senses. Just as objects put into fire are burnt out, sensual forms-sight, taste, smell, touch, and sound-are bereft of their power to distract the worshipper when they are transformed and shaped in accordance with the requirements of his goal. Having no longer any interest in sense-perceptions, the worshipper does not now assimilate them .

Words like "other" (apare and anye) in the verses under discussion represent different states of the same worshipper. They are the varying, high and low, states of mind of the same worshipper rather than different forms of yagya.

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे।

आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥२७॥

[ "Yet other yogi offer the functions of their senses and operations of their life-breaths to the fire of yog (self-control) kindled by knowledge.'' ]

In the yagya Krishn has so far spoken of, there are a gradual fostering of pious impulses, restraint of the working of senses, and parrying off of sensual perceptions through a modification of their intent. In a still higher state than this, yogi offer as oblation the functions of all senses and operations of life-breaths to the fire of yog that is lit up by knowledge of God. When restraint is integrated with the Self and the operations of breath and senses are stilled, the current which stimulates passions and the current which propels one towards God merge into the Self. The outcome of yagya then emerges as God-realization, the culmination of this spiritual exercise. When one dwells in the God who had to be realized, nothing else remains to be achieved. Yogeshwar Krishn again explains yagya :

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे।

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥२८॥

[ “Just as many perform yagya by making material gifts in service of the world, some other men perform yagya through physical mortification, some perform the sacrifice of yog, and yet others who practise severe austerities perform yagya through the study of scriptures.’’ ]

There are many who make sacrifice of wealth. They contribute riches to the service of saints. Krishn accepts whatever gifts are offered to him with devotion and he is a benefactor of those who make these gifts. This is the yagya of wealth or riches. To serve every man, to bring those who have strayed back to the right path, by contributing wealth to the cause is the sacrifice of riches. These sacrifices have the capability to nullify the natural sanskars. Some men mortify their senses through penances for the observance of their dharm. In other words, their sacrifice, made according to their inherent properties, is penance-humiliation of the body, and it belongs to the stage between the lowest and highest levels of yagya. Wanting in adequate knowledge of the path that leads to God, the Shudr worshipper who is just setting out on the way of worship undergoes penance by rendering service, the Vaishya by acquisition of divine riches, the Kshatriya by demolishing passion and anger, and the Brahmin with his ability to be united with God. All of them have to toil alike. In truth yagya is one and there are only its lower and higher stages governed by innate properties.

My noble teacher, the revered Maharaj Ji, used to say, “To trim the mind along with the body and senses in keeping with the goal, is penance. They tend to digress from the goal but have to be pulled back and applied to it.”

There are many who practise the yagya of yog. Yog is the joining of the Soul, wandering amidst nature, with God who is beyond nature. A clear definition of yog is found in the twenty-third verse of Chapter 6. Usually, the meeting of two objects is yog. But is it yog if a pen meets paper or a dish meets a table. Of course not, because both are made of

the same five elements: they are one, not two. Nature and the Self are two entities, distinct from each other. There is yog when the nature-based Soul meets the identical God, and when nature is dissolved in the Soul. This is the true yog. So there are many who resort to a strict practice of restraint because it is conducive to this union. The practicers of the yog of sacrifice (yagya) and they who are given to severe austerities keep in view their own Self and perform the yagya of knowledge. Here, nonviolent but severe austerities such as restraint, religious observance, the appropriate posture of sitting, serenity of breath, withholding of the mind along with the physical organs, retention, meditation and perfect absorption of thought in the Supreme Spirit, are indicated as the eightfold features of yog. There are many who undertake Self-study because they aim at Self-knowledge. Reading books is but the first step to Self-knowledge, for in the true sense it is derived only from contemplation of the Self which brings about attainment of God, and the final outcome of which is knowledge or intuitive perception. Krishn now points out what is done for this yagya of knowledge or contemplation of the Self.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे।

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥२९॥

[ “As some offer their exhalation to inhalation, others offer their inhaled breath to the exhaled breath, while yet others practise serenity of breath by regulating their incoming and outgoing breath.” ]

Meditators on the Self, sacrifice the vital air to apan and similarly apan to pran. Going even higher than this, other yogi restrain all life-winds and take refuge in the regulation of breath (pranayam).

That which Krishn calls pran-apan, Mahatma Buddh has named anapan. This is what he has also described as shwas-prashwas (inhaling and exhaling). Pran is the breath that is inhaled, whereas apan is the

breath which moves out. Sages have found by experience that along with breath we also imbibe desires from the surrounding environment and, similarly, transmit waves of inner pious as well as impious thoughts with our exhalations. Non-assimilation of any desire from an external source is the offering of pran as oblation, whereas suppression of all inner desires is the sacrifice of apan, so that there is generation of neither internal desire nor grief because of thoughts of the external world. So when both pran and apan are properly balanced, breath is regulated. This is pranayam, the serenity of breath. This is the state in which the mind is supreme, for restraint of breath is the same as restraint of mind.

Every accomplished sage has taken up this subject and there is mention of it in the Ved (Rig, 1.164.45 and Atharv, 9.10.27). This is what the revered Maharaj Ji also used to say. According to him, the one and only name of god is recited at four levels: baikhari, madhyama, pashyanti, and para. Baikhari is that which is manifest and audible. The name is pronounced in such a way that we as well as other men sitting around us may hear it. Madhyama is muttering the name at a medium pitch, so that the worshipper alone, but not even the man sitting beside, may hear it. This articulation is made within the throat. There is thus the gradual generation of an unbroken stream of harmony. When worship is yet more refined, the stage is reached when the worshipper develops the capacity to visualize the name. After this the name is not recited, because it has now become an integral part of the life-breath. The mind stands as an onlooker and just views what the breath shapes. When does it come in? And when does it go out? And what does it say? Sages of perception tell us that it articulates nothing except the name. Now the worshipper does not even recite the name; he just listens to the melody of the name arising from his breath. He just watches his breath and that is why this stage of breath-control is called pashyanti.

At the stage of pashyanti, the mind is set up as a witness-an onlooker. But even this is not needed when there is yet further refinement. If the desired name is just imprinted on memory, its melody will be heard spontaneously. There is no need of recitation now, for the name rings in the mind by itself. The worshipper does not recite any longer and neither does he have to compel the mind to hear the name, and yet the recitation goes on. This is the stage of ajapa, of the unrecited. It will be a mistake to think, however, that this stage is reached without commencing the process of recitation. If it has not been initiated; there will be nothing like ajapa. Ajapa means that recitation which does not desert us even though we do not recite. If only memory of the name is firmly setup in the mind, recitation begins to flow through it like a perennial stream. This spontaneous recitation is named ajapa and this is the recitation by transcendental articulation (parvani). It takes one to God who is the essence beyond nature. There is no variation in speech after this, for after providing a view of God it is dissolved in him. This is why it is called para.

In the quoted verse, Krishn has only told Arjun to watch his breath, whereas later he himself will stress the importance of intoning OM. Gautam Buddh too has dwelt upon inhalations and exhalations in Anapan Sad. After all, what does the Yogeshwar really intend to say? In truth, beginning with baikhari, then progressing on to madhyama, and going even further than this, at the stage of pashyanti, one attains control over breath. At this stage recitation is integrated with breath. And what is there to recite now when the worshipper has just to watch his breath? It is for this reason that Krishn speaks only of pran-apan rather than telling Arjun to “recite the name.” This is so because there is no need to tell him this. If he says it, the worshipper will go astray and begin to grope about in the dark alleys of neither levels. Mahatma Buddh, my noble Godlike teacher, and all those who have trodden this path say the same thing.

Baikhari and madhyama are the portals by which we enter into the sphere of recitation. It is pashyanti that provides access into the name. The name begins to flow in an unbroken stream in para, and the internal, spontaneous, intoning of the name never abandons the worshipper after this.

The mind is linked with breath. That is the state of victory of the mind when the eye is set on the breath, when the name is incorporated into breath, and no desire of the external world can enter into the worshipper. With this the final outcome of yagya emerges.

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति।

सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥३०॥

[ “Yet others who subsist on strictly regulated breath and offer their breath to breath, and life to life, are all knowers of yagya, and the sins of all who have known yagya are destroyed.’’ ]

They who partake of restricted food offer as oblation their breath to breath-life to life. My noble teacher, the revered Maharaj Ji, used to say that the food, posture of sitting, and sleep of a yogi should be steady. Regulation of food and pleasure is a necessity. Many yogi who observe such discipline renounce their breath to breath, concentrating on inhalations and paying no heed to exhalations. With each incoming breath they hear OM. Thus men whose sins have been destroyed by yagya are men of true knowledge. Krishn now speaks of the outcome of yagya.

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम्।

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥३१॥

[ “O the best of Kuru, the yogi who have tasted the nectar flowing from yagya attain to the eternal supreme God, but how can the next life of

men bereft of yagya be happy when even their life in this world is miserable?" ]

What yagya generates-what results from it, is nectar the substance of immortality. A direct experience of this is wisdom. The one who feeds on it becomes one with the eternal God. So yagya is something which with its completion unites the worshipper with God. According to Krishn, how can the next world bring happiness to men bereft of yagya when even the mortal, human birth is beyond their reach? It is their inevitable lot to be born in lower forms and nothing better than them. So the observance of yagya is a necessity.

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे।

कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥३२॥

[ "Many such yagya are laid down by the Ved but they all germinate and grow from the ordained action, and performing their various steps you will be free from worldly bondage.'' ]

There are several steps of yagya elaborated by the Ved-God's own words. After realization, God assumes the body of accomplished sages. The minds of men who have become one with God are then mere instruments. It is God who speaks through them. So it is in his voice that these yagya have been enunciated.

Krishn tells Arjun that he should know that all these yagya have arisen from action. This is what he has said before, too. (3. 14) He has just pointed out that all those, whose sins have been wiped out by yagya, are the real knowers of yagya. And now he tells Arjun that he will be freed from the bonds of the world if he knows that yagya arises from action. Here the Yogeshwar has clearly stated the meaning of action. That conduct is action by which yagya is accomplished.

Now, there is no harm in engaging ourselves in trade, service, and politics if in doing them we can earn divine riches, contemplate an

accomplished teacher, restrain the senses, offer the oblation of outgoing breath to the incoming breath, sacrifice inhalations to exhalations, and regulate the vital winds of life. But we know that it is not so. Yagya is the only exercise that transports one to God the very moment it is complete. Do any other work you like if it takes you to God in the same way.

In fact, all these forms of yagya are but internal processes of contemplation-forms of worship which make God manifest and known. Yagya is the special ordained mode that helps the worshipper to traverse the path that leads to God. That by which this yagya is accomplished, regulation and serenity of breath, is action. The true meaning of "action" is therefore "worships".

It is usually said that whatever is done in the world is action. Work without desire or selfish interest is the Way of Selfless Action. Some feel that it is action if they sell imported fabric for greater profit. They feel they are men of action. For others, dealing in indigenous goods to serve the country is the Way of Selfless Action. If one acts with dedication or trades without thinking of profit and loss, that is the Way of Selfless Action. Fighting a war or contesting an election without thought of winning and losing makes one a doer of selfless action. But these deeds cannot bring salvation. Krishn has said categorically that the ordained action is only one, and he has told Arjun to do it. The performance of yagya is action. And yagya is sacrifice of breath, restraint of the senses, contemplation of the Supreme Spirit-the accomplished teacher-who symbolizes yagya, and finally, regulation and serenity of breath. This is the stage of mind's conquest. The world is nothing but an extension of mind. In Krishn's words the transient world is conquered right here, "upon this bank and shoal of time," by men who have achieved even-mindedness. But what is the relation between such equanimity of mind and subjugation of the world? If the world itself is conquered, where does one halt? According to Krishn God is flawless

and impartial, and unaffected by passion; and so is the mind of the man who has secured knowledge. So the two become one.

In brief, the world is an expanded form of the mind. So the mutable world is the object that has to be offered as a sacrifice. When the mind is perfectly controlled, there is also perfect control over the world. The outcome of yagya appears clearly when the mind is fully restrained. The nectar of knowledge that is generated by yagya takes the man who has tasted it to the immortal God. This is witnessed by all sages who have realized God. It is not that worshippers of different schools perform yagya in different ways. The different forms cited in the Geeta are only the higher and lower states of the same worship. That by which this yagya begins to be done is action. There is not a single verse in the entire Geeta which defends or approves of worldly enterprise as a way to the realization of God.

Usually, for the performance of yagya people build an altar, light a fire on it and, intoning swaha, cast barley grains and oil seeds into the sacred fire. Is this, we may ask, not yagya? Krishn has this to say about it:

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥३३॥

[ "Sacrifice through wisdom is, O Parantap, in every way superior to sacrifices made with material objects, because (O Parth) all action ceases in knowledge, their culmination.'' ]

The yagya of wisdom, made by means of austerity, continence, faith, and knowledge, which brings about a direct perception of God, is the most propitious. All actions are fully dissolved in this knowledge. Knowledge is thus the crowning point of yagya. Thenceforth there is neither any profit in the doing of action nor any loss in abstaining from it.

In the same way there are yagya that are performed with material objects, but they are insignificant in comparison with the yagya of knowledge which enables a man to have direct perception of God* *[*The sage of Pippalad says, in the Prashn Upanishad, that they who desire children and are given to rites, considering them the highest accomplishment, attain to the world of the Moon (Rayi) and are born again on earth, but they who are devoted to the worship of the Self, by means of austerity, continence, faith, and knowledge, go by the northern path and attain the world of the Sun. (Pran)]*. Even if we sacrifice millions, build hundreds of altars for the sacred fire, contribute money to good causes, and invest money in the service of sages and saints, this yagya is much inferior to the sacrifice of knowledge. Krishn has just told us, that real yagya is restraint of the vital winds of life, subduing of the senses, and control of the mind. From where can we learn its mode? From temples, mosques or churches? Shall we get it by going on pilgrimage to holy places or by dipping ourselves in sacred rivers? Krishn's pronouncement is that it can be had from only one source, namely, the sage who has known the reality.

**तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।**

**उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥३४॥**

[ "Obtain that knowledge (from sages) through reverence, inquiry and innocent solicitation, and the sages who are aware of reality will initiate you into it.'']

So Arjun is advised to approach seers with reverence, self-surrender, and humility, to be instructed in true knowledge through devoted service and guileless curiosity. These seers will enlighten him on it. The ability to acquire this knowledge comes only with a wholly dedicated service. They are seers who enable us to have direct perception of God. They know the mode of yagya and they will teach it to Arjun. Had the war been external, what need was there of a seer?

Isn’t Arjun standing directly before the Lord? Then why does Krishn ask him to go to a seer? In truth, the meaning of Krishn who was a yogi-indeed a Yogeshwar-is that today the worshipper is with him, but he may be confused in future when he is no longer present to guide him. “Ah me! “ Arjun will say, “Krishn has gone and I don’t know to whom to turn now for guidance. That is why Krishn tells Arjun categorically that he should approach seers who will instruct him in true knowledge.

**यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव।**

**येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥३५॥**

[ “Knowing which, O son of Pandu, you will never again be a prey like this to attachment, and equipped with this knowledge you will see all beings within yourself and then within me.’’]

After acquiring this knowledge from sages Arjun will be rid of all attachment. Possessed of this knowledge he will perceive all beings in his Self, that is, he will see the extension of the same Self everywhere, and only then can he become one with God. Thus the means of attaining to that God is the sage who has perceived reality.

**अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः।**

**सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि ॥३६॥**

[ “Even if you are the most heinous sinner, the ark of knowledge will carry you safely across all evils.’’ ]

We should not make the error of concluding from this that we will know salvation even with committing more and yet more sin. Krishn rather intends to say by this that we should not be under the mistaken impression that we are such great sinners that there cannot be salvation for us. So this is Krishn’s message of hope and courage to Arjun and to everybody: that despite being the doer of sins greater than the sins of all

sinners he will sail across sins successfully, by the ark of knowledge acquired from seers. Thus-

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥३७॥

[ "As blazing fire turns fuel to ashes, so verily O Arjun, the fire of knowledge reduces all action to ashes.'' ]

Here we have a portrayal, not of an introduction to knowledge through which one approaches yagya, but of the culmination of knowledge or perception of God, in which there is first the destruction of all unrighteous inclinations and in which then even the act of meditation is dissolved. The one who had to be attained to has been attained. Now who is there to look for by further meditation? The sage with the wisdom that arises from perception of God brings his actions to an end. But where does this perception of God occur? Is it an external or internal phenomenon?

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते।

तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥३८॥

[ "Doubtlessly nothing in the world is more purifying than this knowledge and your heart will realize it spontaneously when you have attained to perfection on the Way of Action." ]

Nothing in this world purifies as this knowledge does. And this knowledge will be manifest to the doer alone, not to anyone else, when his practice of yog has reached maturity, not at its inception, not in the middle, not externally but within his heart-within his Self. What is the required ability for this knowledge? In the words of the Yogeshwar,-

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥३९॥

[ ‘‘The worshipper of true faith who has subdued his senses attains to this knowledge and at the very moment (of attainment) he is rewarded with the benediction of supreme peace.” ]

For realization of God one needs to possess faith, determination, and restraint of the senses. If there is no intensely felt curiosity for the knowledge of God, even taking refuge in a seer will not bring it.

Also, mere faith is not enough. The worshipper’s effort may be feeble. Therefore, the determination to proceed resolutely along the prescribed way is a necessity. Along with this it is also necessary to restrain the senses. Realization of the Supreme God will not come easily to one who is not free from desire. So only a man who has faith, enthusiasm for action, and restraint of the senses can have this knowledge. And the very moment this knowledge dawns upon him, he is blessed with the ultimate peace, because after this there is left nothing more to strive for. After this he will never know anything other than peace. But,

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥४०॥

[ “For a skeptic, bereft of faith and knowledge, who strays from the path of righteousness, there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next; he loses both the worlds.” ]

For the man who is ignorant of the way of yagya- for the doubting man who is of devoid of faith and who strays from the path of good, there is no happiness, no next life in human form, and no God. So if there are any doubts in the worshipper, he should go to a seer and resolve them, or else he will never know the reality. So who is blessed with knowledge?

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम्।

आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ॥४१॥

[ “O Dhananjay, action cannot bind the man who relies on God and who has surrendered all his actions to him by the practice of karm-yog and all whose doubts have been put to rest by knowledge.’’ ]

Action cannot enslave the man whose deeds are dissolved in God by the practice of yog, whose doubts have been resolved by perception, and who is united with God. Action will be brought to an end only by yog. Only knowledge will destroy doubts. So Krishn finally says:

तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः।

छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥४२॥

[ “So, O Bharat, dwell in yog and stand up to cut down this irresolution that has entered into your heart because of ignorance with the steel of knowledge.’’ ]

Arjun has to fight. But the enemy-irresolution-is within his own heart, not outside. When we proceed on the way of devotion and contemplation, it is but natural that feelings of doubt and passion will arise as obstacles before us. These enemies launch a fearful assault. To fight them and overcome them, through the destruction of uncertainties by the practice of the ordained yagya, is the war that Arjun has to wage, and the result of this war for him will be absolute peace and victory after which there is no possibility of defeat.

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At the outset of the chapter, Krishn says that he had imparted knowledge of yog to Vivaswat in the beginning. Vivaswat taught it to Manu and Manu to Ikshwaku, and thus the knowledge evolved to the stage of rajas. The teacher who had imparted this knowledge was Krishn or, in other words, one who is birthless and unmanifest. A realized sage too is birthless and unmanifest. His body is but an abode in which he

dwells. It is God himself who speaks through his voice. It is by some such sage that yog is imparted. Even a glance of such a sage irradiates one's life-breath with the effulgence of Self-realization. Possessing the light it sends forth, the sun symbolizes the ever-luminous God who resides in, as well as, expresses himself through breath. ''Imparting the knowledge of yagya to the Sun'' stands for awakening of the divine life that lies dormant and unperceived in every human heart. Transmitted to breath this light is hallowed into a sacred discipline. In due course it enters the mind as a resolve. Realization of the significance of Krishn's utterance to Vivaswat gives rise to a hankering for achieving it and yog is then transformed into action.

The point in hand needs further elaboration. Vivaswat, Manu, and Ikshwaku are symbolic primogenitors of mankind. Vivaswat represents the unenlightened primitive man without spiritual awakening. It is a sage who sows the seeds of devotion in this man. There then comes into being a desire for God that arises in the mind which is Manu in microcosm. The mind transforms the aspiration into an acute craving which is embodied as Ikshwaku, and the process of changing it into practice is speeded up. After having gone through the first two stages, when the worshipper is endowed with divine impulses, the yearning for God enters upon the third stage when yog becomes known and begins to manifest its glory. This is indeed a stage fraught with risk, for yog is now on the brink of destruction. But they who are loved devotees and, dear friends are provided with succour by sages like Krishn.

When Arjun refers to his recent birth, Krishn points out that, although unmanifest, imperishable, birthless, and pervading all beings, he yet manifests himself by atm-maya and by subduing by his yog his nature with its three properties. What then does he do after manifesting himself? Since the beginning he has undergone one incarnation after another to protect that which is fit for accomplishment, as well as to

destroy forces which give rise to evils and to strengthen the Godlike dharm. His birth and acts are of a metaphysical nature and only a seer can perceive them. The state of Kaliyug (predominance of forces of darkness) brings about the advent of God, but only if there is earnest devotion. But novice worshippers are unable to know whether God is speaking to them or whether the signs coming to them are devoid of any purpose. Whose voice do we hear from the heavens? My noble teacher used to tell us that when God showers his grace and when he turns within the Self into a charioteer, he speaks and provides support from every column, every leaf, verily from emptiness itself, and from every corner. When with constant refinement there is awareness of the essence that is God, only then, by feeling his presence as if by touch, does the worshipper know the reality. So Krishn has told Arjun that his manifest form can be viewed only by seers, after which they are released from birth and death.

He has further explained the mode of God's manifestation: of how it is an event that occurs within the heart of a devoted yogi and certainly never externally. Krishn has said that action does not bind him, and just so they who have attained to the same state are not bound by action. It was with realization of this truth that earlier men desiring salvation set out on the path of action to reach that state, and the man who has known what Krishn knows from his elevated position, and Arjun, too, desiring salvation, will be what Krishn is. This attainment is assured if yagya is performed. Krishn has then told us the nature of this yagya and that the final outcome of this exercise is realization of the highest reality-of the ultimate tranquillity. But where to go in order to know the way of knowledge? Krishn has advised Arjun to approach sages and win them over with reverence, humble inquiry, and guileless solicitation. He has also said unambiguously that this knowledge he can acquire only by his own action rather than through the conduct or action of others. Also,

it will come to him when his yog is in an accomplished stage rather than at the outset. Perception of knowledge will be within the sphere of heart, not outside. And it comes only to those who are dedicated, determined, in control of their senses, and free from all doubt. So finally Arjun is advised to sever the irresolution in his heart with the sword of renunciation. Thus war is within the heart. The war of the Geeta is quite unconcerned with any external conflict.

In this chapter, Krishn has thus mainly elaborated and explained the nature and form of yagya, and added that the deed of accomplishing it is action.

Thus concludes the Fourth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **"Yagya Karma-Spashtikaran"** or **''Elucidation of the Deed of Yagya''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Fourth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 5

## The Supreme God : Enjoyer of Yagya

In Chapter 3, Arjun said, “Lord ! Why do you cast me into dreadful acts when you believe that the Way of Knowledge is superior?” He found the Way of Knowledge easier to practise, for this way assures heavenly life in the event of defeat and the state of ultimate glory in that of victory. So there is profit in both success and failure. But by now he understands well that action is a prerequisite of both the ways. Yogeshwar Krishn has also urged him to rid himself of doubts and take refuge in a seer, because he is the only source of the awareness he seeks. However, before he chooses one of the two ways, Arjun makes a humble submission.

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि।**

**यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥१॥**

[ ‘‘Arjun said, ‘You have so far commended, O Krishn, both the Way of knowledge through Renunciation and then the Way of Selfless Action; so now tell me which one of the two is decidedly more propitious.’ ’’]

Krishn has extolled action by the Way of Knowledge through Renunciation and then he has spoken approvingly of action done with a selfless attitude. So Arjun now wishes to be enlightened on the specific way which is in Krishn’s well considered view more conducive to his well-being. If we are told two ways for going to a certain place, it is but proper

to inquire which one of the two is more convenient. If we do not raise this question, the implication is that we do not have to go anywhere. Yogeshwar Krishn responds to Arjun’s submission thus:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥२॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘Both renunciation and selfless action achieve salvation, but of the two the Way of Selfless Action is the better because it is easier to practise.’”]

If both the ways are equally effective in bringing about the final absolution, why is the Way of Selfless Action described as superior? This is what Krishn has to say about it.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति।

निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

[ “He, O the mighty-armed (Arjun), who envies none and desires nothing is fit to be regarded as a true sanyasi and, liberated from the conflicts of passion and repugnance, he breaks away from worldly bondage.” ]

The one who is free alike from love and animosity is a sanyasi, a man of renunciation, irrespective of whether he has chosen the Way of Knowledge or the Way of Selfless Action. Emancipated from both attachment and repugnance, he is happily released from the great fear of repeated births.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः।

एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥४॥

[ “It is the ignorant rather than men of wisdom who make a distinction between the Way of Knowledge and the Way of Selfless Action, for he who dwells well in any one of the two attains to God.” ]

Only they who know but inadequately of spiritual life find the two ways divergent, because the final outcome of both is the same, namely, attainment of God.

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते।

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स: पश्यति ॥५॥

[ ‘‘That man perceives reality who regards the Way of Knowledge and the Way of Selfless Action as identical, because the liberation attained by knowledge is also achieved by selfless action.’’ ]

The goal which is reached by the worshipper of knowledge and discrimination is also achieved by the doer of selfless action. So he knows the truth who regards the two ways as similar from the point of view of consequence. Now, when the two ways converge at the same point, why does Krishn pronounce one preferable to the other? He explains:

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः।

योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥६॥

[ “But, O the mighty-armed, renunciation is well highly impossible to achieve without selfless action, but the one whose mind is set on God is soon united with him.” ]

The giving up of all that we have is most painful without selfless action. It is indeed impossible if selfless action has not been initiated at all. Therefore, the sage who reflects on the identical God, and whose mind and senses are stilled, soon attains to that God by the performance of selfless action.

It is but evident that selfless action has also to be practised on the Way of Knowledge, because the requisite action for both the ways is the same. This is the act of yagya, which precisely means “worship.” The difference between the two ways is only a matter of the worshipper’s attitude. Whereas one devotes himself to the deed after a thorough appraisal of his own ability and with self-dependence, the other-the doer of selfless action-engages in the task with total reliance upon the adored God. So, whereas the former is like a student who studies for an examination privately, the other is like one who is enrolled in a school or college. Both of them have an accomplished teacher to master the same course, take the same test, and even the certificate to be awarded to them is the same. Only their attitudes to their task are different.

Sometime back, saying that passion and anger are formidable enemies, Krishn urged Arjun to kill them. Arjun found it most painful. Krishn thereupon told him that beyond the body there are the senses, beyond the senses there is the mind, beyond the mind there is the intellect, and beyond all these there is the Self, the power at whose behest he is driven to all his actions. To act with a clear understanding of one’s own strength and with dependence on one’s own ability is the Way of Knowledge. Krishn prompted Arjun to concentrate his mind on him and fight, dedicating all his actions to him and in total freedom from attachment and grief. To perform a deed with a sense of surrender to the worshipped God is the Way of Selfless Action. So the action in the two ways is the same and so is the final outcome.

Stressing the same, Krishn now says that the achievement of renunciation, of the ultimate cessation of good as well as evil actions, is impossible without selfless action. There is no way by which we may sit idly, just telling ourselves: “I am God, pure and wise. For me there is no action and no bondage. Even if I may appear as participating in evil, it is really only my senses functioning according to their nature.” There is no

such hypocrisy in Krishn’s words. Even he, the Yogeshwar, cannot, without the required action, bestow the ultimate state upon a beloved friend like Arjun. If he were able to do this, there would be no need for the Geeta. Action has to be accomplished. The stage of renunciation can be achieved only through action and the one who does it soon realizes God. Krishn now speaks about the characteristic marks of the man who is blessed with selfless action.

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः।

सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥७॥

[ “The doer, who is in perfect control of his body through a conquest of his senses, pure at heart and singlemindedly devoted to the God of all beings, is untainted by action even though he is engaged in it.’’ ]

That man is possessed of yog, of selfless action, who has conquered the body, whose senses are subdued, whose thoughts and feelings are spotlessly clean, and who has realized his identity with God, the Spirit of all beings. He remains unblemished even though he is involved in action, because his deeds are aimed at garnering seeds of the highest good for those who lag behind. He is untainted because he dwells in the essence that is God, the fountain head of the vitality of all beings. There is nothing for him hereafter for which he should quest. At the same time, there can be no attachment to what he has left behind, because they have all paled into insignificance. So he is not engulfed by his deeds. Thus we have here a picture of the ultimate stage of the worshipper who has achieved selfless action. Krishn explains again why this man, blessed with yog, remains unattached to action.

नैव किंचित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित्।

पश्यञ्श्रृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन् ॥८॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥९॥

[ ‘‘The man who perceives, in whatever he is doing, whether hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, giving up or seizing, and opening or closing his eyes, that only his senses are acting according to their properties and that he himself is a non-doer, is indeed the one with true knowledge.’’ ]

It is a belief, or rather experience, of the man to whom God is visibly present that he does absolutely nothing. Rather than being a mere fancy, it is a firm conviction he has arrived at through the performance of action. After having known this he cannot but believe that whatever he appears to be doing is really the operation of his senses according to their natural properties. And, when there is nothing higher than God whom he has apprehended, what greater joy can he aspire to have by touching any other object or being? Had there been something better beyond, there must have been attachment. But after the attainment of God there is no further goal to strive for. And neither is there anything left behind for him to renounce. So the man endowed with attainment is unimmersed in action. This thought is now illustrated by an example.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥१०॥

[ “The man who acts, dedicating all his actions to God and abandoning all attachment, is untouched by sin as a lotus leaf is untouched by water.’’ ]

The lotus grows in mud, but its leaf floats above the water. Ripples pass over it night and day, but if you look at the leaf it is always dry. Not a drop of water clings to it. So the lotus growing in mud and water is yet unsullied by them. Just so, the man, all of whose actions are

merged into God (this dissolution occurs only with perception, not before), and who acts with total detachment because there is nothing beyond to be desired, is unaffected by action. Yet he is busy with the performance of action for the guidance and good of the ones who are behind him. This is the point that is stressed in the following verse.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि।

योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥११॥

[ "Sages give up the attachment of their senses, mind, intellect and body, and act for inner purification." ]

A sage abandons all desires of his senses, mind, intellect, and body, and practises selfless action for inner sanctity. Does that mean that the Self is tainted with impurities even after he has merged into God? It cannot be so because after this dissolution the Self becomes one with all beings; he sees his own extension in all beings. So he acts, not for himself, but for the purification and guidance of other beings. He acts with his mind, intellect and physical organs, but his Self is in a state of actionlessness and constant peace. He appears to be active outwardly, but inside him there is only endless tranquillity. The rope cannot bind any longer because it is burnt out and what remains is only the impression of its twist.

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥१२॥

[ "The sage who sacrifices the fruits of his action to God attains to his state of sublime repose, but the man who desires rewards of action is chained by desire.'' ]

The man who is blessed with the final outcome of selfless action and who dwells in God-the root of all beings, and who has forsaken desire for the fruits of action because the God who was the goal of his

action is no longer distant from him, achieves the state of sublime peace beyond which there is no greater peace and beyond which he will never again know restlessness. But the wayfarer, who is still on his way and attached (he has to be attached because the "fruit" of his action, God, is still unattained) to the consequence of his action, is fettered by it. So desires continue to arise until the moment of attainment, and the worshipper has to be on his guard right till that point. My most revered teacher, Maharaj Ji, used to say, "Mark me, maya prevails if we are even in the least removed from God and he is removed from us." Even if the attainment is to be tomorrow, today the worshipper is at best only an ignorant man. So the questing worshipper ought not to be careless. Let us see what is further said about this.

**सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी।**

**नवद्‌वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥१३॥**

[ "The man who is in perfect control of his heart and mind, and acts accordingly , dwells blissfully in the abode of his body with its nine apertures* *[*The human body, is described as the city of nine gates, such as mouth, ears, eyes etc.]* because he neither acts himself nor makes others act.'' ]

The man who is in perfect control of himself and dwells, beyond his body, mind, intellect, and material nature, in his own Self-this man of restraint undoubtedly neither acts nor is a cause of action. Even prompting the men left behind to act does not affect his serenity. This man who has realized his Self and abides in him, and who has subdued all his organs which provide him with objects of physical pleasure, dwells in the ultimate bliss that is God. In truth, thus, he neither acts nor effects any undertaking of action.

The same idea is stated differently when Krishn says that God, too, neither acts nor gets any action accomplished. The accomplished teacher, God, the adored one, the realized sage, an enlightened guru,

and the endowed one-are all synonymous. No God descends from heaven to accomplish anything. When he functions, he operates through these Self-abiding, reverent, and loving Souls. The body is a mere dwelling place for such a Soul. So the action of the Supreme Self is the same as that of the individual Self, because he acts through him. So, in truth, the Self who has become one with God does nothing even while he is engaged in action. The next-verse is again related to the same problem.

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥१४॥

[ "God creates neither action nor the capacity for action, and not even the association of action with its fruits, but at the same time, vitalized by his spirit, it is nature that acts.'' ]

God makes neither the power of beings to act nor actions, nor does he decide the fruits of action, and all objects and beings act only under the pressure of innate natural properties. One acts according to the three properties, tamas, rajas and sattwa. Nature is vast, but it affects a man only to the extent to which his natural disposition is virtuous or vitiated - divine or devilish.

People usually say that it is God who does or gets things done, and we are mere instruments. It is he who makes us do well or ill. But Krishn maintains that God neither acts nor prompts action, and that he also does not produce favourable or unfavourable circumstances. Men act by themselves according to the compulsions of their inborn nature. They are impelled to act by the inevitability of their inherent traits; it is not God who acts. Then why do people say that everything is done by God? Krishn dwells upon the problem.

**नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः।**

**अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥१५॥**

[ “The all-pervading God, the Glorious One, accepts neither men’s sinful acts nor attachment because their knowledge is enveloped by ignorance (maya*) *[*Ishwar is the God associated with the power called maya, the power to evolve as the empirical universe, or with universal ignorance; the individual man is God associated with individual ignorance. The distinction between God and man is that God controls maya, but man is controlled by it. Cf. The Upanishad Mandukya.]*.”]

The one who has been named God is now described as the Glorious One because he is embellished with sublime glory. That God, all powerful and radiant, accepts neither our sins nor our righteous actions. But people yet say that he does everything, because their knowledge is clouded with ignorance. As yet the men who speak so are only mortal beings, enclosed within bodies. Subject to delusion they can say anything. So Krishn now elucidates the function of knowledge.

**ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः।**

**तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥१६॥**

[ “But the knowledge of one whose ignorance has been dispelled by Self-perception shines like the sun and renders God brilliantly visible.’’ ]

The mind, whose darkness has been pierced through by knowledge of the Self and which has thus acquired true wisdom, is lit up as if with the light of the sun and God is clearly manifested to it. This does not by any means imply that God is some kind of darkness, for he is truly the source of all light. He is the fountain of all light, but his light-it appears-is not for us because it is not seen by us. When darkness is swept away by perception of the Self-like the Self, like the sun, the resulting knowledge absorbs his brightness within itself. After this there is

no longer any darkness. Here is what Krishn has to say about the nature of this knowledge:

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥१७॥

[ "Those men attain salvation-after which there is no next birth-whose mind and intellect are free from delusion, who dwell with a single mind in God and put themselves at his mercy, and who are freed from all sin by knowledge.'']

That state is knowledge in which a man dedicates himself wholly to God and is dependent on him, with a mind and an intellect shaped accordingly, and overflowing with his essence. Knowledge is not garrulousness or being argumentative. The man who is endowed with this knowledge attains to salvation and is liberated from physical ties. It is such men who are called pandit, men of profound learning and wisdom. Only a man who has achieved this ultimate state deserves the name of pandit.

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥१८॥

[ "Sages who look evenly at a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even the most despicable of men are blessed with the highest degree of knowledge." ]

They are realized sages whose sins have been destroyed by knowledge and who have achieved the state in which there is no further birth. And such men regard all creatures impartially, making no distinction between a discerning Brahmin and an outcast, or between a dog and an elephant. In their eyes there is neither any special merit in the wise and learned Brahmin nor any special demerit in the ostracized man. For him neither is a cow holy nor a dog unholy. He does not find

any special greatness about a massive elephant. Such men of knowledge are impartial of view and equalminded. Their eyes are fixed not on the skin, on the external form, but on the Soul-the inner essence. The difference is only this: men who know and are reverent to the Self are close to God, whereas others straggle behind. Some have gone a stage ahead, while some are yet lingering behind. Men of knowledge are conscious that the body is but an apparel. So they look at the embodied Soul and attach no significance to the outward form. They do not discriminate.

Krishn was a cowherd and he had tended cows. So he should have spoken of this creature in reverential terms. But he has done nothing like that and he concedes no place to the cow in dharm. He has only admitted that like other beings she, too has a Soul. Whatever be the economic importance of cows, their religious elevation is just an invention of the ignorant with enslaved minds. Krishn said earlier that ignorant minds are riven with dissensions, because of which they devise an endless variety of deeds.

The eighteenth verse suggests that there are two kinds of sages. First, there are sages whose knowledge is perfect. Secondly, there are sages who are possessed of reverent knowledge. Let us linger for a moment to see how they are different. It is an axiom that everything has at least two stages, the highest-the ultimate stage-and the initial-the lowest stage. The lowest stage of worship is the one at which it is commenced, when it is taken up with discernment, detachment, and dedication, while the highest stage is that at which the final outcome of the act of worship is about to emerge. The same is true of the Brahmin class-the state of sattwa, when there is the advent of properties that provide access to the Supreme Spirit and there is the presence of knowledge and a reverential attitude. At this stage all the faculties that take one to God are spontaneously active within-control of mind, restraint

of senses, beginning of the process of intuition-direct perception, steady contemplation, concentration, and abstract meditation. This is the lowest stage of the state that is named Brahmin. Its highest stage is reached when with gradual perfection the Self at last stands face to face with God and is dissolved in him. Now that which had to be known is perfectly known. The sage who has achieved this is the one with perfect knowledge. This sage, who is now beyond rebirth, looks equally at creatures, because his eyes are turned within to see the enshrined Self. So Krishn now describes what is the ultimate lot of this sage:

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥१९॥

[ “They who achieve the state of equality conquer the whole world within the mortal life itself, because they rest in God who is also unblemished and impartial.’’ ]

Sages with perfectly poised minds are freed from material nature during their worldly life itself. But what is the relation between an even mind and conquest of nature? When the world itself is annihilated, what is the position of the Self? In Krishn’s view, since God is immaculate and impartial, the minds of sages who have known Him are also freed from all blemishes and inequalities. The sage becomes one with God. This is the ultimate birthless state and it is acquired when the ability to overcome the enemy, the world of appearances, is fully developed. This ability is there when the mind is controlled and when one has achieved the state of equality, for the world of appearances, is but an extension of the mind. Krishn then speaks of the distinctive marks of the sage who has known God and merged into him:

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम्।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥२०॥

[ “That equal-minded man dwells in God who is neither delighted by what others love nor offended by what others scorn, who is free from doubt, and who has perceived Him.’’ ]

Such a man transcends feelings of love and hatred. He does not go wild with joy when he gets something which is cherished and admired by others. In the same way, he is also not repelled by what others find distasteful. With such a constant mind, free from doubt, and endowed with knowledge of the divine Self, he always dwells in God. In other words, he is a man of attainment, and-

**बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत् सुखम्।**

**स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥२१॥**

[ “That man becomes one with God and enjoys eternal bliss who is single-mindedly dedicated to him and whose heart is free from desire for worldly joys.” ]

The man who has renounced desire for the pleasure of objects of the external world attains to the felicity of God. His Self is united with God and the resulting happiness is therefore eternal. But this happiness comes only to him who is unattached to pleasures.

**ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।**

**आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥२२॥**

[ “Since the pleasures arising from the association of senses with their objects are a cause of grief and are transitory, O son of Kunti, men of wisdom do not desire them.” ]

Not only the skin, but all senses feel the sensation of touch contact. Seeing is the touch of the eye as hearing is the touch of the ear. Although seeming pleasant to experience, all the enjoyment arising form these contacts of senses with their objects only leads to miserable births. Moreover, these sensual gratifications are also transient and

destructible. So Arjun is told that men of discrimination are not entangled in them. Krishn then enlightens him on the evil that is embodied by attachment to these pleasures.

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात्।

कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥२३॥

[ “That man in this world is a true and blessed yogi who, even before the death of his mortal body, acquires the ability to withstand the onslaughts of passion and anger, and conquers them for ever.’’ ]

He is the real man (nara=na+raman)-one who is not given to physical dalliance. Even while he is living in the mortal body, he is capable of facing the fierce urges of passion and anger, and of destroying them. He has achieved selfless action in the world and he is happy. He has won the happiness of identity with God in which there is no grief. According to divine ordinance, this happiness is acquired in this mortal, worldly life itself and not after the death of the physical body. This is what Sant Kabir intends to convey when he counsels his disciples to place their hope in this life. The assurance that salvation comes after death is false and given only by unworthy and selfish teachers. Krishn also says that the man who succeeds in overcoming his passion and anger in this life itself is the doer of selfless action in this world, and he is blessed with everlasting happiness. Passion and anger, attraction and repulsion, desire for the touching of objects by the senses, are our mortal enemies whom we have to vanquish and destroy. Krishn again dwells upon the nature of the doer of selfless action.

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥२४॥

[“The man who knows his Self and whose happiness and peace lie within merges into God, and he attains to the final beatitude that lies in him.” ]

The man, who is joyous within, at peace within, and illumined within by his perception of the Self and the identical Universal Spirit, is a realized sage who is united with God and who attains to his ineffable state. In other words, there is first destruction of perversions-alien impulses such as attachment and aversion, then the emergence of perception, and finally submersion in the all-pervading ocean of final beatitude.

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः।

छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥२५॥

[ "They attain to the eternal peace of God whose sins have been destroyed by perception and whose doubts are resolved, and who are single-mindedly concerned with the good of all beings.'']

He is a man of attainment whose sins have been dispelled by his vision of God, whose doubts have been done away with, and who is wholeheartedly devoted to the service of all mankind. Only a man of this elevated state can help others, for how can he who is fallen in a ditch himself help others to get out? So compassion appears as a natural attribute of realized sages and they, with their spiritual perception and conquest of the senses, realize the peace that comes with the final dissolution in God.

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम्।

अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥२६॥

[ "Men who are free from passion and wrath, who have conquered their mind, and who have had a direct perception of God, see the all-tranquil Supreme Self wherever they look.'' ]

Krishn thus repeatedly stresses the distinctive features of the character and life of doers of selfless action in order to motivate and encourage Arjun and, through him, all his other disciples. The question is now almost resolved. To conclude his argument, however, Krishn reverts to the necessity of contemplating the incoming and outgoing breath for the realization of this sage's state. In Chapter 4, he told us of offering pran to apan, of sacrificing apan to pran, and of the regulation of both the life winds while giving his account of the process of yagya. The same subject is taken up again at the end of the present chapter.

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः।

प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥२७॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः।

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥२८॥

[ "That sage is liberated for ever who shuts out of his mind all objects of sensual pleasure, keeps his eyes centered between the two brows, regulates his pran and apan, conquers his senses, mind and intellect, and whose mind is fixed on salvation." ]

Krishn reminds Arjun of the vital need of excluding from the mind all thoughts of external objects as well as of keeping the eyes fixed steadily between the two brows. Keeping the eyes between the brows does not simply mean concentrating them at something. It is rather that while the worshipper is sitting erect, his eyes should be pointed ahead in a straight line from the midpoint between the brows; they should not wander about restlessly and look right and left. Keeping the eyes aligned with the ridge of the nose- we must be careful that we do not start watching the nose-and balancing pran against apan and keeping the eyes steadily fixed all the while, we should direct the vision of mind, the

Soul, to the breath and let him watch it: when does the breath go in, how long is it held-if it is held in for only half a second, we should not try to prolong it by force, and how long does it stay out? It is hardly necessary to say that the name in the breath will ring audibly. Thus when the vision of mind learns to concentrate steadily on the inhaled and exhaled breath, breathing will gradually become constant, firm, and balanced. There will be then neither generation of inner desires nor assaults on the mind and heart by desires from external sources. Thoughts of external pleasure have already been shut out; now there will not even arise inner desires. Contemplation then stands steady and straight like a stream of oil. A stream of oil does not descend like water, drop by drop; it comes down in a constant, unbroken line. Similar to this is the motion of the breath of a sage of attainment. So the man, who has balanced his pran and apan, conquered his senses, mind and intellect, freed himself from desire, and fear and anger, perfected contemplative discipline, and taken refuge in salvation, is ever-liberated. Krishn finally discourses upon where this sage goes after liberation and what he achieves.

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम्।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥२९॥

[ “Knowing the truth that it is I who enjoy the offerings of yagya and penances, that I am God of all the worlds, and that I am the selfless benefactor of all beings, he attains to final tranquillity.” ]

This liberated man, who knows that Krishn-God of the gods of all worlds-is the recipient and enjoyer of the offerings of all yagya and penances, and that he is the selfless well-wisher of all beings- knowing all this he achieves the ultimate repose. Krishn says that he is the enjoyer of the worshipper’s yagya of inhaled and exhaled breath as well as of austerities. He is the one in whom yagya and penances are at last

dissolved and so their doer comes to Him, the ultimate serenity that results from the completion of yagya. The worshipper, liberated from desire by selfless action, knows Krishn and realizes him as soon as he is blessed with this knowledge. This is named peace; and the one who achieves it becomes God of gods just as Krishn is.

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At the beginning of the chapter Arjun raised a question about Krishn's alternate praise of the Way of Selfless Action and the Way of Knowledge through Renunciation. He wished to know that which, according to Krishn's considered judgement, is doubtlessly superior. Krishn told him that there is ultimate good in both. In both the worshipper has to perform the ordained act of yagya, but the Way of Selfless Action is yet superior. Without such action there is no end of desire, and of good and evil deeds. Renunciation is the name, not of a means, but of the goal itself. The man of renunciation is a doer of selfless action, a yogi. Godliness is his mark. He neither acts nor makes others act, and all beings are engaged in action only under the pressure of nature. He is the seer-the pandit-because he knows God. God (Krishn) is known as an outcome of yagya. He is the one into whom breath-recitation, yagya, and purificatory rites all merge. He is the tranquillity which the worshipper experiences as an outcome of yagya, that is, with the attainment of this repose he is transformed into a sage like Krishn. Like Krishn and other seers, he also becomes God of gods because he is now one with God. That the coming about of this attainment may take a number of births is a different matter. Chapter 5 has thus elucidated the unique and amazing point that the power that dwells within the sage after his realization of God is no other than the spirit of the Supreme Lord - of the God who is the enjoyer of the offerings of all yagya and penances.

Thus concludes the Fifth Chapter in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the

Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **‘‘Yagya Bhokta Mahapurushasth Maheshwarah”**, or **‘‘The Supreme God- Enjoyer of Yagya’’.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition of the Fifth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **“Yatharth Geeta”.**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 6

## The Yog of Meditation

Whenever there is rank growth, in the name of dharm, of too many customs and practices, of forms of worship and prayer, and of schools and sects, some great Soul appears, makes his advent to demolish them, and to install and strengthen the one and only God, as also to broaden the path of action that leads to him. The practice of renouncing action and thus of being known for wisdom were also all too prevalent in the age of Krishn. That explains why he affirms, for the fourth time, at the beginning of this chapter, that action is an essential, inevitable requirement of the Ways of both Knowledge and Selfless Action.

He told Arjun in Chapter 2 that there was no more propitious a way for a Kshatriy than to fight. If he loses the war, he will be rewarded with godly existence, while victory will bring him ultimate bliss. Knowing this, he should fight. Krishn further pointed out to him that he had imparted this precept to him in regard to the Way of Knowledge: the precept that he should wage war. The Way of Knowledge does not imply inactivity. While it is true that the initial urge comes from an accomplished teacher himself, the follower of knowledge has to engage in action after self-appraisal and due judgement of the pros and cons, and of his strength. Fighting is thus unavoidable on the Way of Knowledge.

In Chapter 3, Arjun asked Krishn why, when he thought the Way of Knowledge superior to that of Selfless Action, he was prompting him to sinful acts. In the prevailing circumstance he found the Way of Selfless Action more hazardous. Thereupon he was told by Krishn that he had imparted both the ways, but according to the provisions of neither of them is it allowed to go along without the performance of action. A man does not achieve the state of actionlessness by just not commencing work, nor does he attain to ultimate liberation by abandoning an undertaken enterprise. The ordained process of yagya has to be accomplished for both the ways.

So Arjun was well acquainted with the truth that, whether he prefers the Way of Knowledge or the Way of Selfless Action, he has to act. Yet he again asked Krishn in Chapter 5 which of the two ways was better from the point of view of outcome; And which was more convenient? Krishn replied that both were equally propitious. Both the ways take one to the same goal and yet the Way of Selfless Action is superior to that of Knowledge, because no one can gain yog without acquitting himself of selfless action. The required action is the same in both cases. There is thus now no ambiguity about the fact that one cannot be either an ascetic or yogi without performing the appointed task. The only difference is between the attitudes of the wayfarers who tread along the two ways.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः।**

**स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥१॥**

[ ‘‘The Lord said, ‘The man who performs the ordained task without desiring its fruits, rather than the one who just gives up (lighting) the sacred fire or action, is a sanyasi and a yogi.’’’ ]

Krishn insists that only that man who has made true renunciation or achieved yog who engages in the one action that is worthy of doing with absolutely no desire for any rewards. No one becomes a sanyasi or a yogi by just desisting from the ordained action. There are many kinds of work, but out of them the action which is fit to be undertaken and which is ordained is only one. And this one action is yagya which means "worship," the one means for the attainment of God. The practice of it is action; and the man who does it is a sanyasi and a yogi. If a man has just stopped lighting fire or tells himself complacently that he has no use for action because he possesses Self-knowledge, he is neither a sanyasi nor a doer of selfless action. Krishn further speaks about this:

**यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव।**

**न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥२॥**

[ "Remember, O Arjun, that yog (selfless action) is the same as renunciation (knowledge), for no man can be a yogi without a total rejection of desire." ]

What we know as renunciation is also yog, for no man can be a yogi without giving up all his desires. In other words, sacrifice of desire is essential for men who have chosen either of the ways. Superficially it appears so easy, for all that we need to do in order to become a yogi-sanyasi is to claim that we are free from desire. But according to Krishn it is by no means so.

**आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते।**

**योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥३॥**

[ "Whereas selfless action is the means for the contemplative man who wishes to achieve yog, a total absence of will is the means for one who has attained to it." ]

Performance of action to achieve yog is the way for the reflective man who aspires to selfless action. But when repeated practice of the deed gradually brings one to the stage at which the final outcome of selfless action emerges, absence of all desire is the means. One is not rid of desire before this stage; and-

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते।

सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥४॥

[ "A man is said to have achieved yog when he is unattached to both sensual pleasure and action." ]

This is the stage when a man is not given to sensual pleasure, nor to action. When the culmination of yog is once reached, who is there beyond to strive and look for? So there is no longer any need of even the prescribed task of worship and, therefore, of attachment to action. This is the point when attachments are completely broken. This is renunciation-(sanyas); and this is also achievement of yog. While a worshipper is still on his way and has not yet arrived at this point, there is nothing like renunciation. Krishn then speaks about the profit that accrues from the attainment of yog:

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥५॥

[ "Since the Soul enshrined in a man is his friend as well as foe, it is binding on a man to lift himself by his own effort rather than degrade himself.'' ]

It is man's duty to work for the salvation of his Soul. He must not tempt him to damnation, for the embodied Soul is both his friend and enemy. Let us now see, in Krishn's words, when the Self is a friend and when an adversary.

**बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः।**

**अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥६॥**

[ “The Self is a friend to the man who has overcome his mind and senses, but he is an enemy to one who has failed to do so.’’]

To the man who has vanquished his mind and senses, the Soul within is a friend, but to the man who has not subdued his mind and senses, he is an enemy.

In the fifth and sixth verses Krishn thus insists repeatedly that a man should redeem his Self by his own effort. He must not degrade him, because the Self is a friend. Besides him, besides the Self, there is neither any friend nor any enemy. It is so because, if a man has restrained his mind and senses, his Soul acts as a friend and brings him the highest good. But, if a man’s mind and senses are not restrained, his Soul turns into an enemy that drags him to re- birth in lower forms of life and to endless misery. Men are fond of saying, “I am Soul.” So there is nothing for us to worry about. We cite evidence from the Geeta itself. Isn’t it said there, we ask, that weapons cannot pierce and fire cannot burn and wind cannot wither the Self? He, the deathless, immutable and universal, is therefore me. Believing so, we pay little heed to the warning in the Geeta that this Soul within us can also descend to an inferior, degraded level. Fortunately, however, he can also be saved and elevated; and Krishn has made known to Arjun the action which is worthy of being done and which leads the Soul to absolution. The following verse indicates the qualities of a benign, friendly Self.

**जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः।**

**शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥७॥**

[ “God is ever and inseparably present in the serene heart of the Self-abiding man who is unmoved by the contradictions of heat and cold, happiness and sorrow, and fame and infame.’’ ]

God dwells inextricably in the heart of the man who rests in his own Self and reacts evenly to the dualities of nature such as heat and cold, pain and pleasure, and honour and humiliation. Perfect repose flows through one who has conquered the mind along with the senses. This is the stage when the Soul is liberated.

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः।

युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥८॥

[ “The yogi, whose mind is quenched with knowledge-both divine and intuitive, whose devotion is steady and constant, who has conquered his senses well, and who makes no distinction between objects ostensibly as different as earth, rock, and gold, is said to have realized God.’’ ]

The yogi who has achieved this state is said to be endowed with yog. He has reached the crowning point of yog which Yogeshwar Krishn has portrayed in verses 7-12 in Chapter 5. Perception of God and the consequent enlightenment are knowledge. The worshipper is but grovelling in the mire of ignorance if there is even the slightest distance between him and the adored God and the desire to know him remains unfulfilled. What is called “intuitive” knowledge (vigyan*) *[*An apparently different interpretation of the word will be found in chapter 7.]* here is knowledge of God’s functioning through things, acts, and relations (the manifest universe) which reveal how he is all-pervading, how he prompts, how he guides innumerable Souls simultaneously, and how he is knower of all times-past, present, and future. He begins to guide from the very moment when he makes his advent in a heart as the revered one, but the worshipper is unable to know this at the initial stage. It is only when he has reached the culmination of his contemplative exercise that he

gains full awareness of God's ways. This is vigyan. The heart of the man who is accomplished in yog is satiated with this achievement combined with his knowledge of God and accurate insight. Continuing with his account of this adept in yog, Krishn adds:

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥९॥

[ "That man is indeed superior who view all with an equal mind: friends and foes, the antagonistic, indifferent, neutral or jealous, kinsmen, and the righteous as well as sinners.'' ]

After perceptions of God, a sage is both equal and even-minded. Krishn said in the last chapter that sages who are blessed with knowledge and discrimination regard with an impartial eye a Brahmin, an outcast, and animals so diverse as a cow, a dog, and an elephant. The verse under discussion complements what was said before. That man is doubtlessly a man of excellence who looks equally at all kinds of people, from the highest to the lowest, from the most virtuous to the most wicked, and from the most loving to the most malicious, irrespective of their feelings for him. He looks at the course of Souls within them rather than at their external deeds. The only difference he, therefore, sees between diverse beings is that while some have ascended to higher steps and gotten close to the state of purity, others have lagged behind and are still lingering on the lower steps. All the same, he sees the capacity for salvation in all.

In the next five verses, Krishn describes how a man comes to the possession of yog, how he practises yagya, the nature of the place where the deed is performed, the seat and the posture of the worshipper, the laws which regulate his food and recreation, and sleep and wakefulness, and the quality of effort required for the accomplishment of

yog. The Yogeshwar has done this, so that we too are enabled to perform the appointed deed of yagya by following his precepts.

A brief review of the relevant points is necessary at this point. Yagya was named in Chapter 3 and Krishn said that yagya is the ordained action. In Chapter 4, then, he elaborated the nature of yagya in which the outgoing breath is sacrificed to the incoming breath, the incoming breath offered as oblation to the outgoing breath, and the mind is restrained through serenity of the vital life-winds. The precise meaning of yagya is, as we have seen, "worship," the deed that enables the worshipper to traverse the path to the adored God. Krishn has also dwelt upon it in Chapter 5. But matters such as the seat of the worshipper, the place of worship, the posture of the worshipper, and the manner of worship have not yet been touched upon. It is only now that these subjects are taken up.

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥१०॥

[ "The yogi, engaged in self-conquest, should devote himself to the practice of yog in loneliness in a secluded place, controlling his mind, body and senses, and rid of desire and acquisitiveness.'' ]

Being all alone in a place where there are no distractions, restraint of mind, body, and senses, and a complete rejection of attachments are all essential for a man who is engaged in the task of Self-realization. The following verse contains an account of the place and the seat which are conducive to the exercise.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥११॥

[ "At a clean spot he should devise a seat of kush-grass* *[*Kush: a kind of grass considered holy and forming an essential requirement of Hindu religious*

*ceremonies.]* or deer-skin covered with a piece of cloth, which is neither too high nor too low.'' ]

Cleanliness of place is a question of sweeping and wiping it to keep it neat and tidy. In such a clean place, the worshipper should make for himself a seat of grass or deer-skin, on top of which there is spread a cover of fabric such as silk, or of wool. However, the seat may also be just a simple wooden board. But whatever it is, it should be firm, and neither too high nor too low. The intent behind all this is that something should be spread on the ground to cover it; it may be anything-skin, a mat, a piece of any kind of cloth, or even a wooden plank. It is important that the seat is not shaky. Again, it should be neither too high from the ground nor too low. My revered teacher, Maharaj Ji, used to sit on an about five-inch high seat. Once it so happened that some devotees got him a marble seat that was about a foot high. Maharaj Ji sat on it only once and said, "No, this is too high. A sadhu should not sit too high. It only makes them vain. That does not mean, though, that they should sit too low either, for that gives rise to a sense of inferiority-of contempt for oneself." So he had the marble seat put away in the forest. Maharaj Ji never went there, and neither does anybody else now. That really was an exercise in a practical lesson by the great man. So the seat of a worshipper should not be too high. If it is too high, vanity will overtake him even before he commences the task of divine adoration. After thus cleaning a spot and making a firm and reasonably elevated seat on it,-

**तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः।**

**उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥१२॥**

[ "He should then sit on it and practise yog, concentrating his mind and restraining the senses, for self-purification." ]

Next, then, the posture of sitting (according to the provision, meditation is done in a sitting posture )-the manner in which the worshipper should sit while engaged in contemplation-is taken up.

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः।

सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥१३॥

[ "Holding his body, head, and neck firmly erect, his eyes should concentrate on the tip of the nose, looking neither right nor left.'' ]

In the course of meditation, the worshipper should keep his body, neck, and head straight, steady, and unmoving, like a column of wood as it were. Sitting erect and firm like this, he should keep his eyes fixed on the tip of his nose. Rather than meaning that he should watch the tip of the nose, the directive is that the eyes should look straight in line with the nose. The tendency of eyes of restlessly flitting here and there must be curbed. Looking straight in line with the nose, the worshipper should sit unmoving, and-

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥१४॥

[ "Abiding in continence, fearless, serene at heart, alert and restrained in mind, he should surrender himself firmly to me." ]

What actually does continence (brahmcharya vrat)-celibacy-mean? People usually say that it is restraint of the sexual urge. But it has been the experience of sages that such restraint is impossible so long as the mind is associated with objects, sights, touch, and sounds which inflame the urge. A true celibate (brahmchari) is rather one who is engaged in the task of realizing God (Brahm). The brahmchari is a man of Brahm-like conduct: a doer of the appointed task of yagya that leads men to attainment and ultimate dissolution in the eternal, immutable God. While doing it, the external sensations of touch and of all such

contacts of the mind and other senses have to be excluded in order to concentrate the mind on contemplation of God, on the incoming and the outgoing breath, and on meditation. There are no external memories when the mind rests on God. So long as these memories last, the absorption in God is incomplete. Currents of deviation flow through the mind, not through the body. When the mind is wholly occupied with its adoration of God, not only does the sexual urge but all the other physical urges also cease. So dwelling in conduct that will take him to God, free from fear, in a state of repose, and with a restrained mind, the devoted worshipper should surrender himself totally to an accomplished teacher. But what is the outcome of all this?

**युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः।**

**शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥१५॥**

[ “The yogi with a restrained mind who thus meditates on me incessantly at last attains to the sublime peace that dwells in me.” ]

The yogi who thus always reflects on Krishn, an ideal, accomplished teacher and dwells in God, with a controlled mind achieves his sublime peace. So Arjun is told to constantly devote himself to the task. The treatment of the subject is now almost complete. In the next two verses, Krishn then points out the importance of physical discipline, regulated food, and recreation for the worshipper who aims at the conquest of ultimate bliss.

**नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः।**

**न चाति स्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥१६॥**

[ “This yog, O Arjun, is neither achieved by one who eats too much or too little, nor by one who sleeps too much or too little.’’ ]

Moderation in food and sleep are necessary for a man who wishes to be a yogi. Now, if the man who eats and sleeps immoderately cannot achieve yog, who can?

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥१७॥

[ "Yog, the destroyer of all grief, is achieved only by those who regulate their food and recreation, who strive according to their capacity, and who sleep in moderation." ]

If a man eats too much, he is overtaken by lethargy, sleep, and negligence. And the act of meditation is simply not possible in such a condition. On the contrary, fasting will weaken the body and there will not be enough strength to even sit straight and firm. According to my revered teacher, one should eat a little less than one's need. Recreation, as understood here, is walking according to the available space. Some physical exercise is a necessity; circulation is slowed down in the absence of such exertion and one falls prey to illness. How much a man sleeps or remains awake is determined by age, food, and habit. The most exalted Maharaj Ji used to tell us that a yogi should sleep for four hours and be constantly engaged in meditation. However, men who curb their sleep by force soon lose their sanity. Along with all these, there should also be sufficient effort for the accomplishment of the undertaken task, for without this the act of worship cannot be carried out well. He succeeds in achieving yog who excludes all thoughts of external objects from his mind and who is constantly engaged in meditation. This is what Krishn emphasizes again:

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥१८॥

[ “A man is said to be endowed with yog when, restrained by the practice of selfless action and contented with Self, his mind is freed from all desires.’’ ]

Thus, when disciplined by the practice of selfless action, the mind of a man is firmly centered on God and is indeed dissolved in him, and when there remains no desire, the worshipper is said to have attained to yog. Let us now see what a well-restrained mind is.

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥१९॥

[ “An analogy is (usually) drawn between the lamp whose flame does not flicker because there is no wind and the fully restrained mind of a yogi engaged in contemplation of God.’’ ]

When a lamp is kept where there is not a whiff of air, its wick burns steadily and the flame goes straight up-it does not tremble. So it is used as a simile for the subdued mind of a yogi who has completely given himself up to God. However, the lamp is just an illustration. The kind of lamp that is spoken of here is now going almost out of use. So let us take yet another example. When an incense- stick is burnt, its smoke rises straight up if it is undisturbed by wind. But this, again, is no more than an analogy between smoke and the mind of a yogi. True that the mind has been conquered and restrained, but it is still there. What spiritual splendour is realized when the restrained mind too is dissolved?

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥२०॥

[ “In the state in which even the yog-restrained mind is dissolved by a direct perception of God, he (the worshipper) rests contented in his Self.”]

This state is achieved only by a constant and long practice of yog. In the absence of such exercise, there can be no restraint of the mind. So when the intellect, the refined mind that has been curbed by yog, also ceases to be because it is absorbed in God, the worshipper perceives him through his Self and abides with contented happiness in his own Self. He apprehends God, but he dwells contented in his Soul. In the moment of attainment he sees God, face to face as it were, but the very next moment he finds his own Self overflowing with the eternal glories of that God. God is immortal, constant, unmanifest, and vital; and now the worshipper's soul too is imbued with these divine attributes. True, but now it is also beyond thought. So long as desire and its urges exist, we cannot possess the Self. But when the mind is restrained and then dissolved by direct perception, the very next moment after the visionary experience the embodied Soul is endowed with all the transcendental qualities of God. And it is for this reason that the worshipper now lives happily and contented in his own Self. This Self is what he really is. This is the point of crowning glory for him. The idea is further developed in the next verse.

**सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्।**

**वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥२१॥**

[ "After knowing God, he (the yogi ) dwells for ever and unwavering in the state in which he is blessed with the eternal, sense-transcending joy that can be felt only by a refined and subtle intellect; and...'' ]

Such is the state after attainment in which the worshipper lives for ever and from which he never strays. Moreover,-

**यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।**

**यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥२२॥**

[ “In this state, in which he believes that there can be no greater good than the ultimate peace he has found in God, he is unshaken by even the direst of all griefs.’’ ]

After he is once blessed with God’s transcendental peace, settled firmly in the state of his realization, the yogi Is freed from all grief, and now even the most painful sorrow cannot affect him. It is so because the mind, that feels, is now itself dissolved. So-

तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम्।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥२३॥

[ “It is a duty to practise this yog, untouched by miseries of the world, with vigour and determination, and without a sense of ennui.” ]

That which is equally free from worldly attraction and repulsion is named yog. Yog is experiencing the final beatitude. Attainment of the ultimate essence, that is God, is yog. Engaging in this yog without a sense of monotony or boredom (ennui) and with resolution, is a sacred obligation. He who is patiently engaged in selfless action is the one who succeeds in achieving yog.

संकल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥२४॥

[ “Abandoning all desire, lust, and attachment, and pulling in by an exercise of the mind the numerous senses from all sides,-’’ ]

It is man’s duty to sacrifice all the desires that arise from will along with attachment and worldly pleasure and restrain well with his mind, the senses from straying here and there. And after having done this,-

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥२५॥

[ “His intellect should also rein in the mind firmly and make it contemplate nothing except God and, thus step by step, he should proceed towards the attainment of final liberation.’’ ]

The final dissolution in God comes only gradually with the practice of yog. When the mind is fully under control, the Self is united with the Supreme Spirit. However, at the beginning, when the worshipper has just set out on the path, he has to concentrate his mind patiently on, and think of nothing else except, God. The way of this spiritual enterprise is that attainment comes only with constant application. But at the outset, the mind is restless and refuses to stay at one point. This is what Yogeshwar Krishn speaks of now.

**यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्।**

**ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥२६॥**

[“Doing away with the causes that make the inconstant and fickle wander among worldly objects, he should devote his mind to God alone.’’]

Strictly keeping out all allurements that tempt the changeable and restless mind to associate with worldly objects, the worshipper should try repeatedly to confine it to the Self. It is often contended that the mind should be let free to go wherever it tends to go. After all, where else can it go except to nature, which is also a creation of God? So if it roams amidst nature, it is not transgressing the bounds of God. But according to Krishn this is a misconception. There is no room for such beliefs in the Geeta. It is Krishn’s injunction that the very organs through which the mind strays here and there should be curbed in order to devote it solely to God. Restraint of mind is possible. But what is the consequence of this restraint?

**प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम्।**

**उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥२७॥**

[ “The most sublime happiness is the lot of the yogi whose mind is at peace, who is free from evil, whose passion and moral blindness have been dispelled, and who has become one with God.’’ ]

Nothing is superior to the happiness that comes to this yogi, for this is the happiness that results from identity with God; and this ultimate bliss comes only to that man who is perfectly at peace in his heart and mind, free from sin, and whose property of passion and moral blindness has been subdued. The same idea is stressed again.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥२८॥

[ “Thus constantly dedicating his Self to God, the immaculate yogi experiences the eternal bliss of realization..” ]

The emphasis here is on sinlessness and continuous devotion. The yogi needs to possess these qualities before he can experience the blessedness of touching God and merging into him. So worship is a necessity.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥२९॥

[ “The worshipper, whose Self has achieved the state of yog and who sees all with an equal eye, beholds his own Self in all beings and all beings in his Self.” ]

Yog brings about the state in which the even-minded worshipper sees the extension of his Soul in all beings and the existence of all beings in his own Soul. The advantage of the perception of this unity of all beings is the burden of the next verse.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥३०॥

[ “From the man, who sees me as the Soul in all beings and all beings in me (Vasudev*) *[*Any descendant of Vasudev, specially Krishn.]*, I am not hidden and he is not hidden from me.” ]

God is manifest to the man who sees Him in all beings (that all beings are imbued with his Spirit) and all beings as abiding in Him. God also knows his worshipper in the same way. This is the direct encounter between the yogi and his prompter. This is the feeling of kinship between God and man, and salvation in this case arises from the feeling of oneness that brings the worshipper intimately close to his adored God.

**सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः।**

**सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥३१॥**

[ “The even-minded yogi (who has known the unity of the individual Soul and the Supreme Spirit ) who adores me (Vasudev), the Soul in all beings, abides in me no matter whatever he does.’’ ]

The yogi who realizes the unity of the individual Soul and the Supreme Spirit has risen above plurality and known the unity that binds the whole universe. With this unified vision he contemplates God and none else, for there is no one except God left for him. Whatever mantle of ignorance covered him is now dissolved. So whatever he does, he does with the thought of God.

**आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन।**

**सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥३२॥**

[ “The worshipper, O Arjun, who perceives all things as identical and regards happiness and sorrow as identical, is thought to be the most accomplished yogi.” ]

The man who realizes that this Self is also the Self of all other creatures, who makes no difference between himself and others, and for whom joy and grief are the same, is the one for whom there are no

longer any distinctions nor discriminations. So, he is rightly regarded as a yogi who has attained to the highest excellence in his discipline.

But no sooner has Krishn concluded his discourse on the consequences of perfect mental restraint than Arjun expresses a fresh misgiving.

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥३३॥

[ "Arjun said, 'Since the mind is so restless, I cannot see, O Madhusudan, that it can dwell steadily and long in the Way of Knowledge which you have expounded to me as equanimity.' " ]

Arjun feels helpless. With his fickle and inconstant mind, he can foresee no prospect of a steady and constant adherence to the Path of Knowledge which Krishn has represented to him as the capacity to view all things equally.

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम्।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥३४॥

34. [ "For I find restraining the mind as difficult as restraining the wind, because it is (equally) restless, turbulent, and mighty."

The mind is so fickle and restless (by nature it is something that chums and agitates), obstinate, and powerful. So Arjun is apprehensive that trying to restrain it is going to prove as futile as tying up the wind. Checking the mind is, therefore, as well nigh impossible as checking a storm. At this Krishn says,—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥३५॥

[ ''The Lord said, 'The mind is, O the mighty-armed, doubtlessly fickle and hard to restrain, but it is disciplined, O son of Kunti, by perseverance of effort and renunciation.''' ]

Arjun is "mighty-armed" because he is capable of great accomplishment. The mind is indeed restless and most difficult to subdue, but as Krishn tells him, it is restrained by constant effort and giving up of all desire. Repeated endeavour to keep the mind steadily fixed on the object to which it should be dedicated is meditation (abhyas), whereas renunciation is the sacrifice of desire for or attachment to, all seen as well as heard sense-objects, which include pleasures of the world and also the promised joys of heaven. So, although it is difficult to curb the mind, it can be subdued by constant meditation and renunciation. Therefore,—

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः।

वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥३६॥

[ " It is my firm conviction that while the attainment of yog is most difficult for a man who fails to restrain his mind, it is easy for him who is his own master and active in the performance of the required action.'' ]

The achievement of yog is not really so difficult as Arjun has assumed. It is difficult, indeed impossible, for the man with an unrestrained mind. But it is within the reach of one who has disciplined his thoughts and feelings, and is enterprising. So, Arjun should not abandon his endeavour for yog just because of his fear that it is something impossible to achieve. Yet, he responds rather despairingly to the encouragement as we may see from his next question.

अर्जुन उवाच

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥३७॥

[ “Arjun said, ‘What is the end, O Krishn, of the acquiescent worshipper whose inconstant mind has strayed from selfless action and who has, therefore, been deprived of perception which is the final outcome of yog?’’’ ]

Not all worshippers are rewarded with success in their attempt to achieve yog, although this does not mean that they have no faith in it. The practice of yog is often disrupted by the restless mind. But what happens to men who wished to be yogis but did not succeed because of their fickle minds?

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति।

अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥३८॥

[ “Is it, O the mighty-armed, that this deluded man with no haven to turn to is destroyed like scattered clouds, deprived of both Self-realization and worldly pleasures?” ]

Is this man truly like scattered patches of clouds because his mind is divided and he is confused? If a small patch of cloud appears in the sky, it can neither precipitate rain nor join other clouds, and within moments the wind destroys it. Very much similar to this puny, isolated cloud appears the passive and unpersevering man who begins with an enterprise and then discontinues his efforts. Arjun wishes to be enlightened on what finally happens to such a man. Is he destroyed? If so he has missed both Self-realization and worldly enjoyment. But what is his final end?

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः।

त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥३९॥

[ “You, O Krishn, are the most capable of fully resolving this doubt of mine because I cannot think of anyone else who can do it.’’ ]

The ardour of Arjun’s faith is remarkable. He is convinced that only Krishn can dispel his doubts. No one else can do it. So the accomplished teacher Krishn begins to resolve his devout pupil’s misgivings.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥४०॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘This man, O Parth, is destroyed neither in this world nor in the next because, my brother* *[*The Sanskrit equivalent used here is “tatah,’’ which is a term of love and endearment.]*, one who performs good deeds never comes to grief.’’’ ]

Arjun is addressed as “Parth” because, as we have already seen, he has turned his mortal body itself into a chariot to proceed to his goal. And now Krishn tells him that the man who deviates from yog, because of his mind’s fickleness, is not destroyed in this world or in the next. This is so because a doer of good deeds, of God-related deeds, is never damned. However, what is his destiny?

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥४१॥

[ “The righteous man who deviates from the path of yog achieves celestial merits and pleasures for countless years after which he is

reborn in the house of a virtuous and noble man (or fortunate and thriving man).” ]

What a paradox that the man who has fallen from yog enjoys in the worlds of the virtuous satisfaction of the same desires for sensual pleasure by which his restless mind was lured away from the appointed way in the mortal world! But this is God’s synoptic way of providing him a glimpse of all he wanted, after which he is reborn in the house of a noble man-a man of righteous conduct (or a man of fortune).

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम्।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥४२॥

[ “Or he is admitted to the family (kul) of discerning yogi and such a birth is truly the most rare in the world.” ]

If the deviating Soul is not reborn in the house of a virtuous or affluent man, he is granted a birth which provides him admission to the family of a yogi. In the households of noble men, righteous influences are imbibed right from childhood. But, if not reborn in such houses, he gains admission not to the house of a yogi but to his kul as one of his pupils. Such were men like Kabir, Tulsidas, Raidas, Valmiki and others like them who, though not born in the houses of noble and affluent men, were admitted as pupils to the families of yogi. A birth in which the merits (sanskar) inherited from a previous life are further refined by association with an accomplished teacher, a realized sage, is indeed the most rare. Being born to the yogi does not mean being born as their physical offspring. Well might children be born to a yogi before he had given up home and regard him, out of attachment, as father, but in truth a sage has no one whom he can regard as his family. One hundred times the concern he has for his own children is the concern he has for his faithful and obedient pupils. They, the pupils, are his real Children.

Accomplished teachers do not admit pupils who are not endowed with the requisite sanskar. If my revered teacher, Maharaj ji, were inclined to converting people into sadhus, he could have had thousands of disenchanted men as his pupils, but he sent all the supplicants back home, paying fare to some of them, by intimating and writing letters to families in other cases, and sometimes by persuasion. He had inauspicious omens if some of the contenders were adamant on being admitted as pupils. An inner voice cautioned him that they were wanting in the qualities that make a sadhu and so he rejected them. Smarting under unbearable disappointment, a couple of the supplicants even resorted to the extreme step of taking their own life. Notwithstanding all this, Maharaj Ji would not admit pupils he did not find spiritually equipped to receive and profit by his teaching. After learning of the suicide by one whom he had rejected, he said, “I knew he was terribly alarmed, but I did not know he would kill himself. Had I known this, I would have taken him, for what greater harm could have been in that except that he would have persisted as a sinner?” The revered Maharaj Ji was a man of great compassion and yet he did not accept unworthy pupils. He admitted in all only about half a dozen pupils about whom he had been told by his inner voice: “Today you are going to meet one who has fallen from yog. He has been groping about for several births. This is his name and this is how he looks. Accept him when he comes, impart the knowledge of God to him, and support him in his journey along the path.” So he accepted only these chosen few. That his intuitions were correct may be seen from the fact that from among his chosen disciples we have now a sage living at Dharkundi, another one at Ansuiya, and two or three others who are engaged in the service of mankind elsewhere. They are all men who were admitted as pupils to the family of an accomplished teacher. To be blessed with a birth which provides such opportunity is indeed a most rare event.

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम्।

यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥४३॥

[ "He naturally bears with him into his new birth the noble impressions (sanskar) of yog from his previous existence, and by dint of this he strives well for perfection (that comes from the realization of God).'' ]

The merits he had earned in his previous body are spontaneously restored to him in his new birth, by virtue of which he sets out to achieve the ultimate excellence, that is God.

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः।

जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥४४॥

[ "Although he is lured by objects of sense, the merits of his previous life indeed draw him towards God and his aspiration for yog enables him to go beyond the material rewards promised by the Ved.'' ]

If he is born in a noble or thriving household and is subject to the influence of sense-objects, the traces of virtuous deeds inherited from his previous life yet draw him to the way that leads to God, and even with inadequate endeavour, he is enabled to rise above the fruits mentioned by Vedic compositions and attain to the state of salvation. This is the way of achieving the ultimate liberation. But this cannot be within a single life.

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥४५॥

[ "The yogi, who has purified his heart and mind through several births by intense meditation and thus rid himself of all sins, attains to the ultimate state of realizing God.'' ]

Only an endeavour made over a number of lives effects this ultimate accomplishment. The yogi who practises diligent meditation is well rid of all kinds of impiety and then attains to the final beatitude. This

is the way of attainment. Setting out on the path of yog with but a feeble effort and initiated into it when the mind is yet restless, he is admitted to the family of an accomplished teacher and, with the undertaking of meditation in life after life, he at last arrives at the point called salvation-the state in which the Soul is merged into God. Krishn also said before that the seed of this yog is never annihilated. If we just take a couple of steps, the merits earned from them are never destroyed. A man of true faith can embark upon the ordained action in every circumstance of worldly life. Whether you are a woman or a man, of whatever race or culture, if you are simply a human being, the Geeta is for you. The Geeta is for all mankind-for the man devoted to his family and the sanyasi, the educated and the unlettered, and for everyone. It is not only for that unique creature called a hermit (sadhu). This indeed is Lord Krishn’s pronouncement.

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः।

कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥४६॥

[ “Since yogi are superior to men who do penance, or men who follow the path of discrimination, or men who desire the fruits of action, O Kurunandan, you should be a doer of selfless action.” ]

A yogi, doer of selfless action, surpasses all ascetics, men of knowledge as well as those of action. So Krishn’s final counsel to Arjun is that he should be a yogi. This necessitates an appraisal of what all these types are-

The ASCETIC is one who practises severe austerities and mortification of the body, mind, and senses to shape the yog which has not yet started flowing through him like an unimpeded current.

The DOER is one who is engaged in the ordained task after knowing it, but who applies himself to it without either making an

appraisal of his own strength or a sense of dedication. He is just engaged in the carrying out of an enterprise.

The MAN OF KNOWLEDGE, follower of the Way of Knowledge, is engaged in the performance of the deed of yagya only after gaining a full understanding of the process from a noble mentor, an accomplished teacher, as well as with a clear appraisal and judgement of his own strength; he holds himself responsible for both profit and loss in the undertaking.

The YOGI, doer of selfless action, performs the same prescribed task of meditation with a sense of total surrender to the adored one; the responsibility for the success of his yog is borne by God and the Yogeshwar. Even when there are prospects of failure he has no fear, because the God, whom he craves for, has taken upon himself the task of supporting and upholding him.

All the four types of action are noble as such. But the ascetic, the man of penance, is still engaged in equipping himself for yog. The doer, the man of action, engages in action just because he knows that it has to be undertaken. These two may fail, because they have neither a sense of dedication nor a proper discernment of their assets and liabilities. But the follower of the Way of Knowledge is aware of the means of yog and also of his own strength. He holds himself responsible for whatever he does. And the yogi, the doer of selfless action, has cast himself at the mercy of his adored God, and it is God who will protect and help him. Both of these tread well on the path of spiritual salvation. But the way on which the safety of the worshipper is looked after by God is the superior of the two. It is acknowledged by Krishn. So the yogi is the most superior of men and Arjun ought to be a yogi. He should engage in the task of performing yog with a sense of complete resignation.

The yogi is superior, but even better is that yogi who dwells in God through his Self. The last words of Krishn in the chapter are about this.

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥४७॥

[ “Among all yogi I think that one the best who is dedicated to me and who, abiding in the Self, always adores me.’’ ]

Krishn regards, among all yogi-doers of selfless action, that one as the best who, immersed in his feeling of devotion, always adores him. Worship is not a matter of display or exhibition. Society may approve of such display, but God is offended. Worship is a secret, private activity, and it is undertaken within the heart. The ascent and descent of worship are events that belong to the innermost seats of thought and feeling.

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Yogeshwar Krishn says at the beginning of the chapter that the man who performs the ordained, worthwhile task is a sanyasi. The yogi is also a doer of the same action. One does not become a yogi or a sanyasi just by giving up lighting of fire or undertaking of action. No one can be a sanyasi or yogi without sacrificing desires. We are not rid of will just by claiming that we do not have it. The man who wishes to possess yog should do what ought to be done, for freedom from desires comes only by a repeated and constant undertaking of this action and never before it. Renunciation is complete absence of desire.

The Yogeshwar has then pointed out that the Soul can be damned as well as saved. To the man who has conquered his mind and senses, his Self is a friend who brings the ultimate good. But to the man who has failed to restrain his mind and senses, the same Self is an enemy and his malicious conduct causes griefs. It is, therefore, an

obligation, a sacred trust, that men act to uplift their Soul rather than degrade him.

Krishn has then described the yogi's way of life. About the place where yagya is performed, and the seat and posture of the worshipper, he has said that the place should be clean and secluded, and the seat made of fabric, deer skin or a mat of kush-grass. He has stressed the importance of moderation, according to the nature of the undertaken task, in endeavour, food, recreation, sleeping, and waking. He has compared the restrained mind of a yogi to the steady flame of a lamp in a place where there is no wind. Progressing even further than this, the climax-the stage of ultimate bliss-is reached when even the perfectly restrained mind is dissolved. The eternal joy which is free from all worldly attachment and repulsion is salvation. Yog is that which unites one with this state. The yogi who attains this state achieves an equal vision and looks equally at all beings. He looks at the Soul in others just as he looks at his own Soul. And so he achieves the ultimate peace· So yog is essential. Wherever the mind goes, it is our duty to pull it back and restrain it. Krishn admits that restraint of the mind is the most arduous, but he also assures that it is possible. Control of mind is achieved by practice and sacrifice of desires. Even the man whose endeavour is inadequate reaches, by constant meditation carried out over a number of lives, the point which is known as the ultimate state-the state of union with God. The perfect yogi is superior to all-ascetics, men of knowledge, and those who are just engaged in a business. So Arjun should be a yogi. With true dedication to Krishn, he should accomplish yog within his heart and mind. Thus in the chapter Krishn has chiefly stressed the importance of meditation for the attainment of yog.

Thus concludes the Sixth Chapter in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the

Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **“Abhyas Yog”** or **“The yog of Meditation.”**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition of the Sixth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **“Yatharth Geeta”.**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 7

## Immaculate Knowledge

The foregooing chapters contain almost all the main issues that are brought up in the Geeta. There has been an elaborate presentation of the Way of Selfless Action and the Way of Knowledge; of the nature of action and yagya as well as the mode of the performance and their consequence, of the meaning of yog and its outcome; and of divine manifestation and varnasankar. The importance of waging war-of-action for the welfare of mankind even by men who abide in God has been stressed at length. In the Next chapters Krishn will take up some other supplementary questions, in the context of subjects that have already been touched upon, and whose resolution will be of assistance in the act of worship.

In the last verse of Chapter 6, the Yogeshwar himself laid the basis of a question by stating that the best yogi is one whose Self abides in God. What does abiding firmly in God mean? Many a yogi attain to God, but they feel something missing somewhere. When does that stage appear at which there is not even the least imperfection? When does perfect knowledge of God come about? Krishn now speaks the state in which such knowledge is attainted to.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः।**

**असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥१॥**

[ “The Lord said, ‘Listen, O Parth, to how by taking refuge in me and practising yog with devotion, you shall know me beyond any doubt as the all-perfect Soul in all beings.’’ ]

The essential precondition of this complete awareness of God should be carefully noted. If Arjun wishes to have such knowledge, he has to practise yog with devotion and by casting himself at God’s mercy. But there are several other aspects of the problem which Krishn is going to dwell upon, and he tells Arjun to listen carefully to him so that all his doubts are resolved. The importance of perfect knowledge of the many glories of God is stressed again.

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥२॥

[ “I shall fully teach you this knowledge as well as the all-pervasive action that results from realization of God (vigyan), after which there remains nothing better in the world to know.’’ ]

Krishn offers to enlighten Arjun fully on the knowledge of God along with the knowledge that is here called ‘vigyan*’ *[*See the interpretation of the word in Chapter 6, in the exposition of the eighth verse.]*. Knowledge is the attainment, in the moment of accomplishment, of the substance of immortality (amrit-tattwa) that is generated by yagya. Direct perception of the essence of God is knowledge. But the other knowledge, called vigyan, is the attainment by a realized sage of the ability to act siumultaneously everywhere. It is the knowledge of how God at the same time operates in all beings. It is the knowledge of how he makes us undertake action and of how he enables the Self to travel across the way to the identical Supreme Spirit. This way of God is vigyan. Krishn tells Arjun that he is going to explain this knowledge to him fully, after knowing which there will be nothing better in the world for him to know. True knowers are much too few.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥३॥

[ “Hardly does one man among thousands strive to know me and hardly does one among the thousands who strive for this know my essence.” ]

Only rarely does a man endeavour to realize God and, among those who strive to do so, there is scarcely a man who succeeds in knowing his reality by direct perception. Now, where is this total reality- the entire essence? Is it stationary at one place as a corporal body- a lump of matter, or is it all pervading? Krishn now speaks of this.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥४॥

[ “I am the creator of all nature with its eight divisions-earth, water, fire, wind, ether, mind, intellect, and ego.’’ ]

From Krishn, God, has arisen nature with all its components. This nature with its eight parts is the lower nature.

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥५॥

[ “This nature, O the mighty-armed, is the lower, insensate nature, but against it there is my conscious, living nature which animates the whole world.’’ ]

The nature with eight parts is God’s lower nature, dull and insensible. But, along with this, there is his conscious nature which impregnates and gives life to the whole world. But the individual Soul too is “nature’’ because it is associated with the other, lower nature.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय।

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥६॥

[ "Know that all beings arise from these two natures and that I am both the creator and the end of whole world.'' ]

All beings spring from these animate and inanimate natures. These are the two sources of all life. God (Krishn) is the root of the whole universe, both its creator and destroyer. It springs from him and is also dissolved in him. He is the spring of nature as long as it exists, but he is also the power that dissolves nature after a sage has overcome its limitations. But this is a matter of intuition.

Men have always been intrigued by these universal questions of creation and destruction, which is sometimes calles "doom''. Almost all holy books of the world have attempted to explain these phenomena in one way or another. Some of them insist that the end of the world is brought about by submersion under water, while according to others the earth is annihilated because the sun comes too close to it and burns it. Some call the event the Day of Final Judgement, the day on which God judges all beings, while others explain away the idea of doom as a recurrent features or as dependent on a specific cause. According to Krishn, however, nature is without beginning and end. Changes there have been, but it has never been completely destroyed.

According to Indian mythology, Manu experienced a doom in which eleven sages had sailed, by tying their boat to the fin of a fish, to a towering peak of the Himalayas and found shelter there* *[*The reference here is to Matsya-Avtar, the first of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. During the reign of the Seventh Manu, the whole earth, which had become corrupt, was swept away by a flood, and all living beings perished except the pious Manu and the eleven sages who were saved by Vishnu in the form of a huge fish. The entire episode is, of course, symbolic.]*. In the sacred composition called the Shreemad-Bhagwat* *[*Name of one of the eighteen Puran (repositories of the Hindu mythology). It has already been pointed out that, like the Mahabharat, these scriptures are also ascribed to Maharshi Vyas.]*, which is contemporaneous with Krishn-God came down to earth for his pleasure-

and dealing with his life and precepts, the sage Mrikandu’s son Markandeya Ji has rendered an account of the doom he claims to have seen with his own “eyes”. He lived on the north of the Himalayas, on the bank of the Pushpbhadr river.

According to Chapter 8 and 9 of the twelfth section of Shreemad Bhagwat, the great sage Shaunak and some others told Sut Ji (a pupil of Vyas) the Markandeya Ji had a vision of Balmukund (infant Vishnu) on a Banyan-leaf. But the difficulty was that he belonged to their lineage and was born only sometime before them; and it was a fact that the earth was never submerged and destroyed after his birth. With all this, how was it possible that he had beheld destruction of the earth? What kind of deluge was it?

Sut Ji told them that, pleased with his prayers, God had manifested himself to Markandeya Ji, who had then expressed his wish to see God’s maya, drivn by which the Soul has to wander through endless births. God had granted his wish and one day, when the sage was sitting absorbed in comtemplation, he saw towering, furious waves of the sea hurtling on to him from all sides. Terrible fishes leapt from the waves. He scurried here and there to save himself. The sky, the sun, the moon, heaven itself, and all the constellations were drowned in the flood. In the meantime he saw a Banyan tree with an infant on one of its leaves. As the child breathed in, Markandeya Ji was drawn inside him by the inrushing air, and there he discovered his hermitage along with the solar system and the whole universe alive and intact. Soon after, he was cast out with an exhalation. When his eyes opened at last, Markandeya Ji found him self safe on his seat in his hermitage. So whatever he had seen was but a dream- a vision.

It is evident that the sage had this divine, transcendental vision- this intuitive experience - only after worship spread over years beyond reckoning. It was a perception by his Soul; everything outside was the

same as before. So doom, too, is an event that is revealed by God within the heart of a yogi. When at the completion of the process of worship, worldly influences cease to be and only God remains in the yogi's mind- that is doom. This dissolution is not an external phenomenon. Final doom is the inexpressible state of the total identity of Soul with God while the body yet is. This is something that can be felt through action alone. Whether it is you or me, we are victims of delusion if we judge by the mind alone. This is what we are told now.

**मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किंचिदस्ति धनंजय।**

**मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥७॥**

[ "There is, O Dhananjay, not even one object other than me, and the whole world is linked up with me like the pearls of a necklace." ]

There is absolutely nothing else except God and the whole world is tied up with him. But it is possible to know this only when, as it was said in the first verse of the chapter, one engages in yog with total resignation to God, and never before this. Participation in yog is an indispensable necessity.

**रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः।**

**प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥८॥**

[ "O Arjun, I am that which makes water liquescent, the radiance in the sun and the moon, the sacred syllable OM* *[*The Syllable OM, symbol of God, is divine to Hindus.]*, the word's echo (Shabd*) *[*Knowledge of Self and Supreme Spirit that is beyond the reach or power of words.]* in the ether, and I am also the manliness in men." ]

God is all these and all knowledge; and the whole wisdom of the Ved has been breathed forth from him* *[*The Brihadaranyak Upanishad : "They (the Ved) are the breath of the Eternal."]*. He is also much more.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ।

जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥९॥

[ “I am the fragrance in the earth, the flame in fire, the Soul that animates all beings, and the penance of ascetics.” ]

God pervades the whole universe, the earth, the fire, all creatures and even the severe spiritual austerities that are practised by ascetics. He dwells in every atom.

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम्।

बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥१०॥

[ “Since I am also the intellect in wise men and the magnificence of men of glory, know you, O Arjun, that I am the eternal fountainhead of all beings.” ]

God is the seed from which all creatures are born. Moreover-

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम्।

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥११॥

[ “I am, O the best of Bharat, the selfless power of the strong and I, too, am th aspiration for realization in all beings that is never hostile to God.” ]

God is the righteous aspiration of the mighty and also their strength which is free from all desire. Doesn’t everyone in the world wish to be strong? Some endeavour to achieve it through physical exercise and some through the amassing of nuclear weapons. But Krishn affirms that he is the stength that is beyond all desire and attachment. This is true strength. He is also in all beings the aspiration that is propitious for dharm. God alone is the real dharm. The immortal Soul that holds all within himself is dharm. And God is also that craving which is not inimical to dharm. Krishn had prompted Arjun earlier to aspire to the realization of God. All desires are forbidden, but yearning for the attaiment of God is

essential because we cannot be inclined to worship in its absence. This hunger for God is also a gift from Krishn.

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये।

मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥१२॥

[ "And know that although all the properties of nature (tamas, rajas and sattwa) have arisen from me, they neither dwell in me nor do I dwell in them" ]

All the properties of nature, ignorance, passion and virtue are born from God. Yet, however, he is not in them and they are not in him; he is not absorbed in them and they cannot enter into him because he is unattached to and unsullied by them. He has to gain nothing from nature or its properties, and so they cannot taint him.

Despite this, however, as the body's hunger and thirst are caused by the Soul and yet the Soul is wholly unconcerned with food and water, even so although nature arises from God, he is untouched by its properties and activities.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।

मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥१३॥

[ "Since the whole world is deluded by feelings resulting from the operation of the three properties, it is unaware of my imperishable essence that is beyond them." ]

Blinded by feelings associated with the operation of tamas, rajas and sattwa, men fail to perceive the indestructible and the one reality that is God-quite beyond the properties of nature. So he cannot be known if there is even the slightest trace of these properties. So long as these properties envelop the worshipper's mind, his journey is incomplete. He has still to go along, he is still on the way.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥१४॥

[ “This divine three-propertied yog-maya of mine is most difficult to overcome, but they who seek refuge in me get over the illusion and achieve salvation.” ]

God’s celestial maya, the power from which the empirical universe is evolved, is most difficult to comprehend, but they who are always engaged in the worship of God navigate safely across it. The maya is called divine, but that does not mean that we should start burning incense sticks as a reverent offering to it. It should never be forgotten that it is something that we have to vanquish and get across.

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः।

माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥१५॥

[ “The ignorant and unwise are the most despicable of men and doers of wickedness, because deluded by maya and having demoniacal qualities they do not worship me.” ]

They who contemplate and adore God know this. And yet there are many others who do not worship. Men with evil propensities whose discrimination has been ravished by maya, the meanest amongst manking who are imersed in lust and anger, do not worship God. In the following verse Krishn turns to worshippers.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥१६॥

[ “Four kinds of devotees, O the best of Bharat, worship me : the ones who desire material rewards, the distressed and those men of knowledge who aspire to know me.” ]

The four kinds cover all worshippers. There are first those who do the appointed task because doing it will bring good fortune, they are the doers of selfish action. There are, then, men who devote themselves to God because they wish to be liberated from grief. Yet other devotees long to have a direct perception of God. And, lastly, there are the wise men, the realized sages, who have attained to the stage of reaching the supreme goal.

Material wealth is the means that sustains the body as well as all its relations. So riches and satisfaction of desires are first provided by God. Krishn says that he is the provider of means, but his words suggest more than this. The really lasting wealth is made up of spiritual acquisition. This is the real treasure.

While a worshipper is busy toiling for material gains, God prompts him on towards spiritual achievements, because he knows that spiritual merits are man's real wealth and that his worshipper will not always be contented with material acquisitions alone. So he also begins to bestow spiritual riches on him. Granting profit in the mortal world and support in the next world are both God's burden. Under no circumstances does he leave the worshipper unrecompensed.

There are, then, worshippers with grief-laden hearts. There are also among worshippers of God men who wish to know him fully. Men who have attained knowledge of God by perception also worship him. Thus, according to Krishn, four kinds of men are his devoted adorers. But of all of them the worshippers with the wisdom that comes from perception is the most superior. The significant point is, however, that this sagacious man is a devotee, too. Among all these kinds,-

**तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते।**

**प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥१७॥**

[ “To the wise man of knowledge who worships me, the one God, with steady love and devotion, I am the dearest and so is he to me.” ]

Of all worshippers, they love God most who have been enlightened by perception and who therefore abide in him with sigle-minded devotion. This feeling is reciprocated, for God also loves this worshipper more than anyone else. This wise man corresponds to God; and-

**उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम्।**

**आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥१८॥**

[ “Although they are all generous because they worship me with devotion, the wise man of realization is- I believe- identical with me, his supreme goal.” ]

All the four kinds of worshippers are portrayed as generous. But what charity have they shown? Does God benefit by a worshipper’s devotion? Do they give him something he does not have? Obsviously, the answer to all these questions is a clear, “no”. It is really God alone who is magnanimous. He is ever ready to save Souls from degradation. So generosity is also a quality of those who wish that their Souls are not debased. We have thus a case here of mutual charity. They are all, both God and his worshippers, generous. But, according to Krishn, the worshipper endowned with knowledge is identical with him because that discriminating worshipper dwells in him with the faith that he is his sublime goal. In other words, he is God-he is within him. There is no separation between God and him. The same ideas is re-emphasized in the next verse :

**बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते।**

**वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥१९॥**

[ “The great Soul is indeed most rare who worhips me with the knowledge, acquired at the end of many births, that I (Vasudev) am the only reality.” ]

The enlightened sage, who is at last blessed with perception after meditating for many births, undertakes divine adoration with the conviction that Krishn is everything. Such a sage is the most rare. He does not worship any external entity called Vasudev, but rather feels the presence of God within his own Self. This is the man with discrimination whom Krishn also describes as a seer. Only such realized sages can instruct the human society that is outside them. These seers, who have directly perceived reality, are according to Krishn the most rare. So all men should worship God because he is the giver of spiritual glory as well as pleasure. Yet people do not worship him. The paradox is accounted for in the following verse.

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥२०॥

[ “Driven by the properties of their nature, they who fall from knowledge desire worldly pleasures and, in imitation of the prevailing customs, worship other gods instead of the one single God.” ]

Bereft of discernment because of their craving for sensual plesures, ignorant men are unable to see that the enlightened sage, the accomplished teacher and God alone have real worth. So, urged by their nature or rather by the merits (sanskar) they have earned and stored through many lives, they resort to current creed and practices, and devote themselves to the worship of other gods. Here for first time the Geeta makes mention of other gods.

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥२१॥

[ “It is I who bestow steadiness on the faith of covetous worshippers according to the nature of the gods they worship.” ]

It is God who imparts the quality of unflinching firmness to the devotion of worshippers who adore other gods because they wish for material rewards. It is God who makes the faith in other gods steady. Had gods really existed, this task would have been accomplished by these entities themselves. But since they are only a myth, it is God who has to render the faith of worshippers in them firm and strong.

**स तया श्रद्‌धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते।**

**लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान्‌ ॥२२॥**

[ “Possessing this strengthened faith, the worshipper devotes himself to his chosen deity with devotion and, through this undoubtedly achieves the enjoyment of desired pleasures which are also appointed by my laws.” ]

Possessed of faith that is propped up by God, the desire- ridden worshipper devotes himself with renewed vigour to the adoration of some unworthy gods, but surprisingly he too is rewarded with the desired satisfaction. But this satisfaction is also a gift from God. So God is also the bestower of enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Mean pleasure rather than divine bliss is the reward for those who worship other gods for satisfaction of their desires. But in a way they are rewarded. So there seems apparently nothing wrong with this form of worship. However, this is what Krishn has to say on the question :

**अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्‌भवत्यल्पमेधसाम्‌।**

**देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्‌भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥२३॥**

[ “But the rewards of these deluded men are finite because they only attain to the gods they worship, whereas the man who worships me howsoever he does it - realizes me.” ]

The prizes won by these ignorant men are destructible. They are impermanent because they are worldly pleasures which have a beginning and an end.

The pleasures that are with us today slip away from us tomorrow. Men who worship other gods acquire powers that are themselves perishable. The whole world, from the level of divinities to that of the lowest creatues, is mutable and subject to death. On the contrary, the man who worships God attains to him and so to the ineffable peace that descends on the Soul after he is united with God.

Yogeshwar Krishn had exhorted Arjun earlier to foster gods, that is pious impulses, through the observance of yagya. Good fortune accrues from an increases and strengthening of these riches. And ultimately, with gradual progress, there is the attaintment of perception and supreme peace. In this context "gods" represent forces of piety by which the divinity of God is secured. These godly impulses that have to be fostered are the means for salvation and their twenty-four attributes are enumerated in Chapter-16.

The righteousness which garners the sanctity of God within the worshippers heart is named "god". It was at the outset something internal, but with the passage of time people began to visualize these qualities in palpable forms. So idols were made, the karmkand* *[*An expert of the saction of the Ved which is related to ceremonical acts and sacrificial rites.]* was devised, and truth was lost sight of. Krishn has attempted to refute the misconception about gods and goddesses in verses 20-23 of the present chapter. Naming other gods for the first time here in the Geeta, he has emphatically said that they do not exist. Whenever faith declines or grows feeble, it is he who supports it and makes it firm, and it is also he who provides rewards for this faith. But these rewards are finite and perishable. Fruits are destroyed, gods are destroyed, and worshippers of these god are also destroyed. So only the ignorant who are lacking in

discrimination worship other gods. Later Krishn will even go to the extent of affirmating that such worship is an impiety. (9.23).

**अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः।**

**परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥२४॥**

[ "Wanting in wisdom and oblivious of the reality that I am immaculate and beyond the friend and senses, men regard my manifestation as a physical incarnation." ]

There is nothing like gods and the rewards, too their worship are ephemeral. All this notwithstanding, all men are not devoted to God. This is so because men who are bereft of discernment are, as we have seen in the last verse, only inadequately aware of God's perfection and magnificence. It is for this reasons that they deem the unmanifest God as assuming a human form. In other words Krish was a yogi in the body of a man, verily a Yogeshwar, a Lord of Yog. The one who is a yogi himself and has the ability to impart yog to others is called Yogeshwar, an accomplished teacher. Adopting the right form of worship, and with gradual refinement, sages also come to abide in that state. Although wearing the apparel of a human body, they at last abide in the formless, unmanifest God. But ignorant men yet regard them as ordinary human beings. How can they be God, these men think, when they were born just like them? They are hardlly to blame for this, for their deluded minds, wherever they look, see only the external form. Yogeshwar Krishn now explains why they are unable to see the Spirit embodied within the physical body.

**नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः।**

**मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥२५॥**

[ "Hidden behind my yog-maya, I am not perceived by all and this ignorant man does not know me, the birthless and immutable God." ]

For an ordinary man, maya, the power by which God evolves the physical universe, is like a thick screen behind which God is completely hidden. Beyond this yog-maya, or the practice of yog, there is also another curtain. It is only by a constant and long practice of yog that the worshipper reaches the culminating point of yog where the hidden God is perceived. Yogeshwar Kirshn says that he is hidden by his yog-maya and only they who have secured yog can know him. Since he is not manifest to alll, the ignorant and unwise man does not know him the birthless (who is not going to be born again), eternal (who cannot be destroyed), and unmanifest (who is not going to be manifest again). Arjun initially regarded Krishn as just another mortal. But after he is enlightened and his vision is enlarged, he begins to plead and beg. By and large it is only too true that we are no better than blind men in the matter of recognizing the unmanifest Soul of sages and great men.

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥२६॥

[ "I know, O Arjun, all beings that have been (or will be) in the past, present, and future, but no one knows me (without true devotion)." ]

Why it is so is explained in the next verse :

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत।

सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप ॥२७॥

[ "All beings in the world fall into ignorance, O Bharat, because of the contradictions of attachment and repugnance, and of happiness and sorrow." ]

All men are victims of delusion because of the endless dualities of material nature and so fail to know god (Krishn). Does it imply that no one will know him? In Krishn's words :

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम्।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥२८॥

[ “But they who worship me in every way are selflessly engaged in good deeds, free from sin and delusion, arising from the conflicts of attachment and repulsion, and of firm intent.” ]

Freed from evil and conflicting passions, the doers of virtuous action which brings; the worldly life-of birth and death-to a final end, and which has been variously described as worthy action, ordained action, and the deed of yagya, worship and adore him to achieve redemption.

Here it is evident beyond any doubt that the way to God-ralization is according to Krishn only through an accomplished teacher. One who performs the ordained task under the guidance of such a mentor acquires mastery of spiritual capacity as well as perfect action. This is also further illustrated in the following verses.

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये।

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥२९॥

[ “Only they who strive for liberation from the cycle of birth and death by finding shelter under me succeed in knowing God, spiritual wisdom and all action.” ]

Knowledge of God, of the kinship of the individual and Universal Soul, and of all actions prepares a man spiritually to take refuge in God and seek the ultimate liberation. Along with this-

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः।

प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥३०॥

[ “They who know me as the presiding Spirit in all beings (adhibhut) and gods (adhidaiv), and in yagya (adhiyagya), and whose minds are fixed on me, know me at the end.” ]

Men who know Krishn also know the Supreme Spirit that animates all beings, all gods and yagya. They, whose minds are absorbed in him, know the God in Krishn, dwell in him and attain to him for ever. In verses 26-27, Krishn has said that men do not know him because they are ignorant. But they who aspire to be rid of delusion know him along with God, the embodiment of perfection, the identity between him and the individual Soul as well as the material universe, and perfect action in brief, the immaculate nature of the Spirit that dwells in all beings, gods and yagya. The source of all this is a seer : one who has realized the truth. So it is not that this awareness is impossible to acquire. But there is an appointed way by following which alone can a man hope to possess this perfect knowledge.

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Yogeshwar Krishn has said in this chapter that they who surrender themselves to him and practise selfless action know him perfectly. But hardly one among thousands endeavours to know him and hardly one among those who try really knows him. The worshipper who has had a direct perception of him knows him not as a corporal body- a clod of earth, but as the all-pervading Spirit. The eightfold nature is his lower, insensate nature, but infusing its depths there is the Spirit which is his conscious nature. All beings arise from the association of these two natures. Krishn is the root of all creation. It is he who has made both the radiance of light and the valour of men. He is the selfless manliness of the strong and he, too, is the sacred aspiration of his devotees. All desires are forbidden, but Arjun is told to cherish the desire to realize him. The emergence of this one worthwhile craving is also a blessing from him. The desire to be united with God is the only desire that is in tune with the essence of dharm.

Krishn has further said that ignorant and unwise men do not worship him because, hidden behind his yog-maya, he appears to them

as just an ordinary mortal. It is only by continuous meditation that seekers can pierce through the pall of maya and know the unmanifest essence of his physical incarnation. He cannot be known without this.

He has four kinds of devotees, coveters of rewards, the distressed men who desire to know him and men of knowledge. The wise sage, who is at last blessed with perception after practising meditation over the span of many births, becomes one with Krishn. In other words, it is only contemplation through a number of lives that God can be attained. But men who are afflicted with attachment and aversion can never know him. On the other hand, they who perform the ordained action (which is worship) in a state of freedom from the delusions of worldly attraction and repulsion, and who are diligently engaged in contemplation to be liberated from mortality, know him perfectly. They know him along with the all- pervasive God, perfect action, adhyatm, adhidaiv, and yagya.

They dwell in him and remember him at the end, so that they never lose his memory thereafter. The chapter may thus be summed up as a discourse on the perfect knowledge of God, or what we may call "immaculate knowledge."

Thus concludes the Seventh Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **"Samagr Gyan''**, or **''Immaculate Knowledge''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Seventh Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 8

# Yog With The Imperishable God

At the end of Chapter 7, Krishn said that yogi who do pious deeds are released from all sin and know the all-pervading God. So action is something that brings knowledge of the Supreme Spirit. They who do it know him (Krishn) along with the omnipresent God- the adhidaiv, adhibhoot, adhiyagya, perfect action and Adhyatma* *[*See verses 29-30 and their exposition in Chapter 7].* So action is that which apprises us of them. Men who know them are aware, at the end, of Krishn alone, and this knowledge is never blotted out.

Repeating Krishn's own words Arjun raises a question :

**अर्जुन उवाच**
**किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम।**
**अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥१॥**

[ "Arjun said, Enlighten me, O Supreme Being, on the nature of Brahm, adhyatm, action, adhibhoot and adhidaiv.'' ]

The words adhyatm, action, adhibhoot and adhidaiv are all mysteries to Arjun and he wishes to be enlightened on them.

**अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन।**
**प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥२॥**

[ "Who is adhiyagya, O Madhusudan, and how is he enshrined in the body : and how does the man with a restrained mind know you at the end?'' ]

Who is a adhiyagya and how is he within the body? It is evident that the doer of yagya is some Soul who is based in a human body.

And, at last, how does a man with a fully controlled mind know Krishn at the end? So there are seven questions in all and Krishn proceeds to answer them in that order.

श्रीभगवानुवाच
अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥३॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘The one who is imperishable is the Supreme Spirit (Brahm); abiding in a body he is adhyatm; and the cessation of properties in beings which produce something or the other is action.’’ ]

The one who is indestructible, who never dies, is the Supreme Spirit. Steady devotion to the Self-dominance of the Soul-is adhyatm. Before this stage everyone is ruled by maya, but when a man dwells firmly in God and so in his own Self, he is infused with the sense of supremacy of his Self. This is the culmination of adhyatm. The ceasing-the discontinuance-of the will of beings which results in the creation of both good and evil is, on the other hand, the crowning point of action. This is the perfect action which Krishn had spoken of earlier as known to yogi. Action is now complete and henceforth there is no further need of it. Action is perfected when the desires of beings which create sanskar that are propitious as well as unpropitious are stilled. Beyond this there is not further need of action. So true action is that which brings an end to desires. Such action, therefore, means worship and contemplation that are inherent in yagya.

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम्।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥४॥

[ “Adhibhoot is all that is subject to birth and death; the Supreme Spirit is adhidaiv, and O the unparalleled among men (Arjun), I (Vasudev) am the adhiyagya in the body.’’ ]

Until the state of immortality is achieved, all the transient destructible desires are adhibhoot or in other words spheres of beings. They are the source of the origin of beings. And the Supreme Spirit who is beyond nature is adhidaiv, the creator of all gods, that is righteous impulses- the divine treasure that is finally dissolved in him. Vasudev-Krishn-is adhiyagya in the human body, the performer of all yagya. Thus God himself, dwelling as the unmanifest Soul in the body, is adhiyagya. Krishn was a yogi, the enjoyer of all oblations. And all yagya are at last absorbed in him. That is the moment of realization of the Supreme Soul. Six of Arjun’s questions have now been answered. At last, Krishn takes up the question of how he is known at the end and never forgotten thereafter.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥५॥

[ “The man who departs from the body remembering me doubtlessly attains to me.’’ ]

That accounts for Krishn’s assertion that the man who finally, that is when he has perfect control over his mind and when even this mind is dissolved, severs his relationship with the body and departs from it with remembrance of him, surely achieves total oneness with him.

Death of the body is not the final end, for the sucession of bodies continues even after death. It is only when the last crust of earned merits or demerits (sanskar) has disintegrated, and so also the restrained mind along with it, that the final end comes, and after that the Soul does not have to assume a new body. But this is a process of action and it cannot be rendered comprehensible by just words. As long as the transfer from

one body to another, like a change of clothes, persists, there is no real end of the physical person. But even while the body it yet alive, with control of the mind and dissolution of the restrained mind itself, physical relationship are sundered. If this state were possible after the event of death, even Krishn could not be perfect. He has said that only by worship carried on through innumerable births does a sage gain identity with him. There is then not even the least distance between them. But his achievement is made during a physical life. When the Soul does not have to assume a new body that is the real end of the physical body.

This is a portrayal of real death after which there is no rebirth. At the other end there is physical death which the word accepts as death, but after which the Soul has to be born again. Krishn now dwells upon this :

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥६॥

[ “A man attains, O son of Kunti, to the slate with the thought of which he departs from the body because of his constant preoccupation with that state.’’ ]

A man achieves what he bears in mind at the time of his death. How very easy, we may be led to assume? All that we have to do is just remember God before dying after a lifelong indulgence in pleasures. According to Krishn, however, it is not like this at all. At the moment of his death a man can remember only that which he has thought of all his life. So what is needed is lifelong contemplation. In the absence of this, there is no remembrance at the moment of death of the ideal state which has to be achieved.

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥७॥

[ “So you will doubtless realize me if, with your mind and intellect dedicated to me, you always wage war.’’ ]

How are uninterrupted meditation and combat accomplished simultaneously? It is perhaps the practice of warriors : one goes on shooting arrows while at the same time intoning and yelling names of deities. But the true meaning of remembrance (internal recitation of the name) is something else and it is clarified by the Yogeshwar in the following verse.

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥८॥

[ “Possessed of the yog of meditation and a restrained mind, O Parth, the man who is always absorbed in my thought attains to the sublime radiance of God.” ]

Contemplation of God and practise of yog have an identical meaning. The remembrance, which Krishn has spoken of, requires the worshipper to be possessed of yog and a mind so well subdued that it never strays from God. If these conditions are met and the worshipper then remembers constantly, he attains to the magnificence of God. If the thought of other objects comes to mind, one’s remembrance is still imperfect. Now, when, it is so subtle that it has no room for any other thought except God and does not countenance any other urges, how can it be possible along with the act of waging war? What kind of war is it? When the mind is pulled back from all sides and centered on the object of worship, prompted by natural properties, feelings of attachment and anger, of love and hatred appear as impediments in the way. We try to remember and concentrate, but these feelings agitate the mind and do their utmost to force it away from the desired memory. Overcoming these external impulses is fighting a war; and they can be destroyed only by continuous meditation. This is the war that the Geeta portrays. the

problem then broached is of the object of meditation and Krishn speaks of it.

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार-
मणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप-
मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥९॥

[ "The man who remembers God who is omniscient, without beginning and end, dwelling in the Soul that rules all beings the most subtle of the subtle, unmanifest, provider to all, beyond thought, imbued with the light of consciousness, and quite beyond ignorance..'' ]

God is beyond thought and inconceivable. So long as the mind exists, it urges survive and he is not seen. He is known only after the perfectly restrained mind is itself dissolved. In the seventh verse Krishn spoke of the worshipper's contemplation of him and now he speaks of the contemplation of God. So the instrument of meditation is some accomplished Soul who is imbued with the awareness of reality.

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन
भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्
स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥१०॥

[ "With unwavering concentration, with his life-breath firmly centered between his brows by the strength of his yog, such a man attains to the effulgent Supreme Being.'' ]

The worshipper who always meditates on God with a steady mind realizes his magnificence when his mind is dissolved by the strength of his yog- by the strength from undertaking of the ordained action- which enables him to centre the breath between the two brows so that there is neither inner agitation nor the advent of any will from an

external source. In brief, the realization comes in the state in which all properties, sattwa, rajas and tamas, are perfectly quiet, the vision of mind remains ready on the self and it is achieved by the worshipper who always keeps it in mind that yog is the appointed way of realization. This way is yog, which Krishn has delineated at length in Chapters 5 and 6. He has just told Arjun, “Always remember me.” As we have seen, this is done by resting firmly on the precepts of yog. One who achieves this knows the magnificence of God and becomes one with him, and thereafter his memory is never obliterated from his mind. At this point the question of how God is perceived at the time of departing from the body is resolved. Let us now see the supreme condition that should be the worshipper’s goal and to which the discourse on the Geeta reverts again and again.

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति
विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति
तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥११॥

[ “I shall tell you briefly of the ultimate state which knowers of the Ved call the imperishable, and which is realized by men who aspire for it, act without desire, and practise continence.’’ ]

As was observed in the exposition of the fourteenth verse of Chapter 6, continence is uninterrupted concentration on God through a rejection of ail external associations from the mind rather than a mere curbing of the sexual urge. Constant meditation is true continence, for it is this that brings about perception of God and the final absolution. Such an exercise is the restraint of not one sense, but of all senses. Men who can do this are true celibates. What Krishn is going to tell Arjun about this discipline is therefore something that is fit to be cherished by all hearts.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥१२॥

[ “Shutting the doors of all the sense, that is restraining them from desire for their objects, confining his intellect within the Self, fixing his life-breath within his mind, and absorbed in yog,... ’’ ]

The necessity of renunciation of desire by a perfect control of the senses is repeatedly stressed. The mind has to be confined within the Self, not outside. With the mind so regulating the breath that it is centered between the two eyebrows and, of course, engaged in the practice of yog, for this is an essential prerequisite;-

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन्।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥१३॥

[ “He who departs from the body intoning OM, which is God in word, and remembering me, attains to salvation. ’’ ]

The sage who dies with the knowledge that the imperishable God is the one reality achieves the state of sublime bliss. Krishn is a yogi, a seer who has achieved awareness of the ultimate truth. As a realized sage, an accomplished teacher, he exhorts Arjun to recite OM, symbol of God, and contemplate him. All great. Souls are known by the name of the entity to which they attain and into which they are finally assimilated. It is for this reason that Krishn prompts Arjun to utter the name of God but remember his own (Krishn’s) form. Let us note that he does not tell Arjun to recite his name. With the passage of time, though, Krishn was deified and men began to recite his name; and they are rewarded but only according to the nature of their dedication. Krishn has told Arjun that it is he who both strengthens the devotion of such worshippers and determines their rewards. But these rewards are destroyed along with their recipients.

It is useful to remember how Lord Shiv, the initiator of yog, insisted on the recitation of the syllable “Ram” that signifies the omnipresent God who can be experienced only as an inner voice.

Sant Kabir is also said to have committed himself to the constant recitation of the two sounds represented by “ra” and “m”. And Krishn here advocates the usefulness of OM. God is known by innumerable names, but only that name which prompts and confirms faith in the one God is worthy of constant remembrance and recitation. Worshippers are rightly cautioned by Krishn that the name they recite time and again must not be one that might incline or encourage them to believe in a multiplicity of gods and goddesses who are nothing more than a bundle of myth. OM is unique in the sense that it literally betokens that the supreme authority of God inheres in every “me”. So seekers must desist from wandering here and there to find him outside themselves.

The revered Maharaj Ji would often advise his devotees to keep in mind his form while intoning some name like OM, Ram or Shiv to visualize him and, with him before the mind’s eye, to remember the identical god-the object of their worship. It is an accomplished teacher who is kept in view while meditating. Whether we hold on to a Ram, Krishn,or a hermit who is liberated from ail desire and pleasure of the sense, or to any other being according to our inclination, we can know them only by actual experience, after which they disclose to us the way to some contemporary and accomplished teacher whose guidance we should slowly but surely follow to conquer the material world. At the beginning, I too used to contemplate a huge image of Krishn, but this image was gradually erased from my mind by the advent of perception of my enlightened teacher.

Novices utter the deity’s name, but hesitate to do so while calling a sage in human form. They are unable to discard the bias of their inherited beliefs. So they call to mind some other false god instead. But

this practice is, as we have seen, forbidden by Yogeshwar Krishn as impious. The proper way is to find refuge in some realized sage, an accomplished or enlightened teacher, who has already gone through the experience. Fallacious dogmas are then destroyed and the worshipper is enabled to set upon real action as his pious impulses and the capacity to act according to them are rendered sufficiently strong. So, according to Krishn, the mind is restrained and ultimately dissolved by a simultaneous recitation of OM and remembrance of his form. This is the point at which the accumulated layers of sanskar-of the merits of action-are dissolved and all the relationships of the body severed forever. A main is not rid of the body by just physical death.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥१४॥

[ "The yogi who is firmly devoted to me, and who constantly remembers me and is absorbed in me, realizes me with ease.'' ]

Krishn is easily attained to by the worshipper who has no one except him in his mind, and who thinks steadily only of him and always remembers him. The profit of this attainment is portrayed in the next verse.

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥१५॥

[ "Accomplished sages who have attained to the ultimate state are no longer subject to transient rebirth which is like a house of sorrows.'' ]

It is only after attaining to the Supreme Spirit that man is not born again. Krishn then speaks of the sphere of rebirth.

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥१६॥

[ “All the worlds from Brahmlok downwards are, O Arjun, of a recurrent character, but, O son of Kunti, the soul which realizes me is not born again. ’’ ]

The conception of different worlds (lok) in sacred books is an exercise in the creation of metaphor. There is no dark pit in the nether world in which we are stung and tortured by venomous creatures called hell, nor is there a domain in the sky which we call heaven. Man himself is a god when he is imbued with pious instincts and he, too, is a demon when overtaken by impious impulses. Krishn’s own kinsmen such as Kans, Shishupal, and Banasur were cursed with demoniacal temperament. Gods, men, and sub-humans constitute the three metaphorical worlds. Krishn insists that the Self, carrying with himself the mind and the five senses, assumes new bodies according to the sanskar earned over unnumerable lives.

Gods, embodiments of virtue, whom we call immortal, are also subject to death. And there can be no greater loss than the destruction of piety in this mortal world. What is the use of this godlike body if it works for the destruction of the earned righteousness? All the worlds, from the highest to the lowest, are worlds of suffering. Man alone can shape the action by which he achieves the supreme goal, after which there is no recurrence of birth and death. By the ordained action man can become God and even achieve the position of Brahma himself, the first deity of the sacred Hindu Trinity to whom is entrusted the task of creation. And yet he will not be spared from rebirth until, with restraint and dissolution of the mind, he perceives God and merges into him. The Upanishads reveal the same truth. According to the Kathopanishad, the mortal human is capable of beingimmortal and within this physical body and in this world itself, he can achieve direct perception of the Supreme Spirit by the destruction of all attachments of the heart.

Is Brahma, creator of the world, himself mortal? Krishn said in Chapter 3 that the mind of Prajapati Brahma is a mere tool and God is mainfested through him. It is such great souls who have devised yagya. But it is now revealed that even one who attains to the status of Brahma has to be reborn. After all, what does Krishn really intend to say?

In truth, the realized sages, through whom God is manifested, do not have a Brahma-like mind, but they are addressed as Brahma because they teach and do good. They are not Brahma in themselves, for their mind is at last dissolved, but their mind existing in the course of worship before that stage is Brahma. This mind, constitued of ego, intellect, thought, and feeling, is truly vast and Brahma-like.

But the mind of an ordinary man is not Brahma. Brahma begins tobe shaped from the moment when the mind commences approaching the worshipped God. Scholars of great erudition have ascribed four stages to this process which have been pointed out in Chapter 3.* *[*See the exposition of tenth verse in Chapter 3.]* If we recall them, they are brahmvitt, brahmividwar, brahmvidwariyan, and brahmvidwarisht. Brahmvitt is the mind that is embellished with knowledge of the Supreme Spirit (brahmvidya. Brahmvidwar is that which has achieved excellence in such knowledge. Rather than just achieving distinction in the knowledge of God, brahmavidwariyan is the mind that has turned into a medium for the dissemination of the knowledge and for guidance to others who wish to go along the way. Brahmawidwarisht represents that last stage in which it is flooded with consciousness of the adored God. The mind has its existence until this stage, because the God who irradiates it is yet removed from it. The worshipper is yet within the bounds of nature and, although in an elevated state, he is still subject to recurrent birth and death.

When the mind (Brahma) dwells in celestial radiance, the whole being and its current of thought are awake and alert. But they are

unconscious and inert when they are beset by spiritual ignornace. This is what has been described as brightness and darkness or day and night. These are but figurative renderings of different states of mind.

Even in this superior, Brahma-like state, blessed with knowledge of God and overflowing with his radiance, the relentless succession of the day of spiritual knowledge (which unites the Self with the Supreme Spirit) and the night of ignorance, of light and darkness, persists. Even at this stage maya is still in command. When there is resplendence of knowledge, insensate beings come to consciousness and they begin to see the supreme goal. On the other hand, when the mind is supmerged in darkness, beings are in state of nescience (the lack of knowledge). The mind cannot then ascertain its position and the progress towards God comes to a standstill. These states of knowledge and ignorance are Brahma's day and night. In the light of day the numerous impulses of mind are lit up by God's effulgence, whereas in the night of ignorance the same impulses are buried under the impenetrable gloom of insensibility.

Realization of the immultable, unmanifest God, who is indestructible and much beyond the unmanifest mind, is effected when the inclinations to both good and evil, to knowledge and ignorance, are perfectly hushed, and when all the currents of will the sensible as well as the insensible that disappear from view in the darkness of night and emerge in the light of day are obliterated.

An accomplished Soul is one who has gone beyond these four stages of the mind. There is no mind within him because it has turned into a mere instrument of God. Yet he appears to have a mind because he instructs others and prompts them with firmness. But, in truth, he is beyond the sway of the mind's operation, because he has now found his place in the ultimate unmanifest reality and won freedom from rebirth. But prior to this, when he is still in possession of his mind, he is Brahma and subject to rebirth. Casting light upon these matters, Krishn says :

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥१७॥

[ "Yogi who know the reality of one day of Brahma which is of the duration of a thousand ages (yug) and of one night which is also equal to a thousand ages know the essence of time.'' ]

In the seventeenth verse, day and night are used as symbols of knowledge and ignorance. Brahma comes into being when the mind is endowed with the knowledge of God (brahmvitt), whereas the mind which has achieved the state of brahmvidwarisht marks the crowning point of Brahma. The mind which is possessed of knowledge is Brahma's day. When knowledge acts upon the mind, the yogi makes his way towards God and the innumerable predilections of his mind are suffused with his radiance. On the other hand, when the night of ignorance prevails, the mind and heart are swamped with the contradictions of maya between manifold impulses. This is the furthest limit of light and darkness. Beyond this there is neither ignorance nor knowledge, because the final essence that is God is now directly known. Those yogis who know this essence know the reality of time. They know when the night of ignorance falls and when the day of knowledge dawns, and also the limits of the dominance of time-the point to which it can pursue us.

The sages of yore described the inner realm as thought or sometimes as intellect. In the course of time, functions of the mind were divided into four categories which came to be known as mind, intellect, thought and ego, although impulses are in fact endless. It is within the mind that there are the night of ignorance and also the day of knowledge. These are the days and nights of Brahma. In the mortal world, which is a form of darkness, all beings lie in a state of insensibility. Roaming about amidst nature, their mind fails to perceive the radiant God. But they who

practise yog have woken up from the slumber of insensibility and begun to make their way towards God.

According to Goswami Tulsidas in the Ram Charit Manas, his version of the Ramayana, even the mind possessed of knowledge is degraded to the state of ignorance by evil association. But it is re-imbued with light by virtuous company. This alternation of spiritual ascendancy and decline continues till the moment of attainment. After realization of the ultimate goal, however, there are no Brahma, no mind, no night, and no day. Brahma's day and night are just metaphors. There is neither a night nor a day of a thousand years, nor even a Brahma with four faces. The brahmvitt, brahmvidwar, brahmvidwariyan, and brahmvidwarisht, four successive stages of mind, are his four faces, and the four main divisions of the mind are his four ages (yug). Day and night abide in the tendencies and operations of the mind. Men who know this secret understand the mystery of time- how far it pursues us and who can transcend it. Krishn then goes on to explain the deeds that belong to day as also those that belong to night : what is done in the state of knowledge and that which is done in the obscruity of ignorance.

**अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे।**
**रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥१८॥**

[ "All manifest beings are born from the subtle body of Brahma at the outset of his day and are also dissolved in the same unmanifest body at the fall of his night.'' ]

With the dawning of a day of Brahma's, that is, with the inception of knowledge, all beings come awake in their unmanifest mind, and it is within the same subtle, unmanifest mind that they lapse into unconsciousness. They are unable to see the Supreme Spirit, but they have an existence. The mind, unmanifest and invisible, is the medium of

both consciousness and unconsciousness, of both knowledge and nescience (the lack of knowledge).

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥१९॥

[ “The beings who thus wake up into consciousness are compelled by nature to relapse into unconsciousness with the coming of night and they are then, O Parth, reborn with the advent of day.’’ ]

As long as the mind persists, the succession of knowledge and ignorance goes on. So long as this continues, the seeker is only a worshipper rather than an accomplished sage.

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥२०॥

[ “But beyond the unmanifest Brahma there is the eternal, unmanifest God who is not destroyed even after the destruction of all beings.’’ ]

On the one hand, the mind that is Brahma is imperceptible. It cannot be known by the senses. On the other, there is the eternal, unmanifest Supreme Spirit who is not destroyed even with the destruction of physical beings, or of the invisible Brahma (mind) which gains consciousness with the arising of knowledge and sinks into unconsciousness with the setting of knowledge into the darkness of ignorance. God exists even after the destruction of inclinations of the mind which wake up in the light of day and fall back into insensibility in the darkness of night. These upward and downward motions of the mind cease only after the attainment of God who is the ultimate abode. With the realization of the Supreme Spirit, the mind is coloured by him and becomes what he is. This is the point when the mind is annihilated and in its place only the eternal, unmanifest God remains.

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥२१॥

[ “The unmanifest and imperishable God who is said to be salvation and after realizing whom one does not come back to the world, is my ultimate abode.’’ ]

That eternal unmanifest state is immortal and that is called enlightenment (or attainment) of the supreme goal ! Kirshn says, “This is my ultimate abode, after attaining which one does not return to mortal life and is not reborn.” So now he tells Arjun this way of achieving that eternal, unmanifest state.

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥२२॥

[ “And, O Parth that God in whom all beings exist and who permeates the whole world is realized by steady devotion.’’ ]

Steady, unswerving devotion means the act of remembering none else except God so as to be one with him. Krishn then reveals when even men of such devotion are within the limits of rebirth and when they are beyond it.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥२३॥

[ “And, O the best of Bharat, I shall now enlighten you on the ways by which, after giving up their bodies, yogi arrive at the state of birth-lessness as well as of rebirth.’’ ]

Freedom from rebirth, as we are about to see, is achieved by those who dwell in the light of knowledge.

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम्।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रहम ब्रहमविदो जनाः ॥२४॥

[ “They who depart from the body in the presence of bright flames, daylight, the sun, the waxing moon of the bright half of a month, and the dazzlingly clear sky of the time when the sun moves northwards, attain to God.’’ ]

Fire is a symbol of God’s radiance as day is of knowledge. The bright half of lunar month stands for purity. The six virtues of discrimination, renunciation, restraint, tranquillity, courage and intellect are the six months of the ascendant motion of the sun. The state of upward motion is the progress of the sun to the north of the equator. Enlightened by knowledge of the reality which is quite beyond nature, sages attain to God and they are then not reborn. But what happen to the worshippers who do not realize this state of divine magnificence in spite of their devotion?

**धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम्।**
**तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥२५॥**

[ “Dying during prevalence of the darkness of a gloomy night, the dark half of a lunar month, and the six months of the downward course of the sun, the yogi who desires fruits of his action attains to the dim light of the moon* *[*The sage Pippalad says in the Upanishad Prashn : God, the Lord of beings, made Pran, the primal energy (male principle) and Rayi (female principal), the giver of form. Pran, the primal energy, the sun; and Rayi, the form giving substance, is the Moon.]* and is reborn after enjoying his rewards in heaven.” ]

That Soul is yet far removed from God who departs from the body when the sacred fire of his yagya is smothered by smoke, when the night of ignorance prevails, when the moon is waning in the dark half of a month, when gloom prevails on all sides and the outward looking mind is infested with the six vices of passion, wrath greed, delusion, vanity and malice and he is reborn. Does it mean, however, that along with his body the worship, too, of this seeker is destroyed?

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥२६॥

[ “The way of brightness (that leads to God) and the way of darkness that takes one to the afterworld (the world of Manes to which departed ancestors have gone) are the two eternal ways in the world. One who takes the first achieves birthlessness, whereas the treader on the second is subject to repeated birth and death.’’ ]

Both the ways, of light and darkness, of knowledge and ignorance, have been forever. But the merits of worship are never destroyed. The one who dies in the state of knowledge and brightness achieves ultimate salvation, but the one who departs from the body in the state of ignorance and obscurity has to come back and undergo yet another birth. And this succession of one birth after another goes on until there is perfect light; until that moment the seeker has to carry on his worship. The problem is fully resolved at this point and Krishn then dwells upon the means which are essential for the attainment of final liberation.

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥२७॥

[ “You should always rest upon yog, O Parth, for the yogi who knows the reality of the two ways is never deceived.’’ ]

Knowing the two ways well, the yogi is aware that his act of worship will not be destroyed even if he is reborn because of dying in ignorance. Both the ways have also been forever. So Arjun should at all time practise yog and devote himself to worship, for-

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत् पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम्।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा

योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥२८॥

[ “Knowing this secret, the yogi transcends the rewards of Vedic study, sacrificial rites, penance, and charity and so achieves salvation.” ]

By his contemplation of God, the fruit of yagya, the yogi who comes to know the identical Supreme Spirit by direct perception rather than by just belief or assumption goes beyond the promised rewards, and is liberated for ever. This direct perception of the Supreme Spirit is named Ved that which has been directly revealed by God himself. So when that unmanifest essence itself is known, there remains nothing more to know. After this even the need for the Ved is therefore done away with, for the knower is now no different from him who had revealed it to their seer-composers. Yagya or the appointed task was a necessity earlier, but once the reality is known there remains nothing else to pray for. To subject the senses along with the mind to austerities is penance, but even that is unnecessary now. A total self surrender, in thought, speech and action, is charity. And the auspicious fruit of all these is the attainment of God. And all these are now unnecessary because the desired goal is no longer away from the seeker. The yogi who has realized God transcends the rewards of all these virtuous acts- yagya, penance, charity and others and achieves absolution.

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Five main points have been elaborated in the chapter. At the beginning, made curious by problem hinted at by Krishn at the end of Chapter 7, Arjun puts forward seven questions. He wishes to know the nature of the Supreme Spirit, adhyatm, the perfect action, adhidaiv, adhibhoot and adhiyagya, and how he (Krishn) may be so known at the end that he is never forgotten thereafter. Replying to these questions, Krishn tells him that the one who is imperishable is God. The devotion that secures realization of God is adhyatm; it is the knowledge that

brings man under the domination of Self by freeing him from the supremacy of maya. Shedding away the innate properties of nature which produce good or evil impressions (sanskar)- the annihilation or destruction of these properties is the perfection of action. There is no need of any further action after this. So true action is something that destroys the very source of the merits that are called sanskar.

Transient, perishable desires are adhibhoot. In other words, that which is destroyed is the medium for the generation of all beings. The Supreme Spirit is adhidaiv and in him is dissolved the treasure of divinity. Krishn is himself adhiyagya in the body for all the sacrifices of yagya are made to him. He is the agent who effects the sacrifices. And he is also the one in whom the sacrifices are all dissolved. Adhiyagya is someone who lives within the body, not out of it. Arjun's last question is how he (Krishn) is known at the end. Krishn tells him that man who contemplate him alone and nothing else, and who depart from the body thinking of him, know him by direct perception and become one with what they have perceived. Since they have always contemplated him, at the end also they attain to what they have borne in mind at all time. It is not that this attainment comes after physical death. If perfection were to come only after physical death, Krishn would not be immaculate. Were it so, he would not have the knowledge that is gained from the practice of spiritual discipline through a number of lives. The real end comes when even the wholly restrained mind ceases to be, after which the process of assuming new bodies is discontinued forever. The worshipper then merges into the Supreme Spirit and is not reborn thereafter.

According to Krishn remembrance is the way to this realization. So Arjun should constantly keep him in mind and wage war. How is it possible to do both at once ? Is it that Krishn is referring thus to the usual practice of fighting and at the same time uttering the name of some deity? Remembrance, as he defines it, is incessant contemplation of him

without a thought of anything else. When remembrance is so refined and intent, who can fight? What war is possible with such intense absorption of the mind on a single object. In fact, the real form of the “war” that is the theme of the Geeta emerges only when a worshipper is imersed in such total and unswerving contemplation. This is also the state in which the obstructive properties of maya are clearly visible. Passion, anger, attachment and aversion are our most terrible enemies. They obstruct the worshipper’s memory and to overcome them is to fight a war. The supreme goal is reached only after the destruction of these enemies.

So Arjun is counselled to recite the sacred syllable of OM but contemplate the form of Krishn, and adept in yog. Reciting the deity’s name while at the same time visualizing the known form of a noble mentor, an accomplished or enlightened teacher, is the key to successful worship.

In the chapter Krishn has also taken up the problem of rebirth and said that the whole world, from Brahma himself to the lowest of creatures, repeats itself. But even after all of them are destroyed, his (Krishn’s) sublime, unmanifest being and the steady devotion to him never come to an end.

A man who is initiated into yog is provided with two ways by which he may proceed. On the first of these two paths, blessed with the radiance of perfect knowledge, possessed of six fold excellence (verse 24), in a state of upward motion, and absolutely free from any blemish, the worshipper is assured of redemption. But if there is even the least imperfection about him or any touch of the gloom that prevails in the dark fortnight of a month, and he departs from the body in such a state, he has to undergo yet another birth. However, since he has been a worshipper, instead of being for ever enmeshed in the vicious web of birth and death, after his new birth he sets himself anew to the task of completing his unaccomplished worship.

Thus, following the path of action in his next birth, the imperfect worshipper too can reach the supreme goal. Krishn has also said earlier that even a partial accomplishment of worship does no cease until it has brought about liberation from the great fear of life and death. Both the ways are eternal and indestructible. The man who understands this is ever steady and in repose. So Arjun is advised to be a yogi, for yogi transcend even the sacred rewards of study of the Ved, penance, yagya and charity and so attain to ultimate liberation.

At several points in the chapter there is a reference to the supreme goal as the attainment of God, who is represented as unmanifest, imperishable and eternal.

Thus concludes the Eighth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled "**Akshar Brahm Yog**", or "**Yog with the Imperishable God**."

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Eighth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 9

## Stirring to Spiritual Enlightenment

Till Chapter 6, Krishn made a systematic investigation of yog. Its precise meaning, as we have seen, is the conduct of yagya. Yagya represents that special form of worship which provides access to God, and in which the whole animate and inanimate world is offered as a sacrifice. The immortal essence is known with restraint of mind and ultimate dissolution of the restrained mind itself. The one who partakes of what is generated by yagya at its completion is a truly enlightened man, a realized sage and accomplished teacher who is united with the eternal God. This union, joining together of the individual and the Cosmic Soul, is named yog. The conduct of yagya is called action. Krishn then went on to say in Chapter 7 that the doers of this action know him along with the all-pervasive God, perfect action, adhyatm and adhidaiv, as well as adhibhoot and adhiyagya. He further added in Chapter 8 that this is salvation, which is the supreme goal.

In the present chapter he raises the question of the greatness of the Soul who is endowed with yog. Pervading all, he is nonetheless yet uninvolved. Although he acts, he is yet a non-doer. Besides illumining the nature and influence of this accomplished Soul, the chapter also contains a warning against such hindrances as other gods in the way of the practice of yog; it also stresses the importance of finding shelter under a realized sage, an accomplished teacher, who is possessed of such a Soul.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥१॥

[ ''The Lord said, 'I shall instruct you well with analogy in this mysterious knowledge, O the sinless, after knowing which you will be liberated from this sorrowful world.' '' ]

By offering to impart this knowledge with "vigyan," Krishn means that he will illustrate it with the achievements of a great Soul of attainment: how he functions simultaneously at all places, how he enlightens, and how as a charioteer he always stands beside the Self. Knowing this Arjun will be emancipated from this world of misery where happiness is impermanent.

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम्।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥२॥

[ ''This (knowledge) is the monarch of all learning as well as of all mysteries, most sacred, doubtlessly propitious, easy to practise, and indestructible.'' ]

Substantiated by illustration, this knowledge is the sovereign of all learning. But "learning" here does not mean mastering a language or scholarship in its usual sense. True learning is that which enables the man who has acquired it to go along God's way until he has won salvation. If he gets entangled in the vanity of his achievements or in the material world while he is on the way, it is evident that his learning has failed. His learning, then, is not knowledge but a veil of ignorance. It is only regal learning (rajvidya), spiritual enlightenment, which is profitable beyond any doubt. It is the king of all "secret teaching"* *[*One of the different meanings of the word ''Upanishad.'' The knowledge contained in the Upanishads is indeed secret because traditionally it is imparted only to those who are spiritually ready to receive*

*and profit by it.]* because one can approach it only after the practice of yog is brought to perfection by the unraveling of the knots of both knowledge and ignorance. Holiest of the holy and blessed with excellence, it is also manifestly fruitful. The profit from it is so transparent. No sooner does a man have it than he is rewarded. It is not the blind faith that we will be rewarded in the next life if we are virtuous in this life. Buttressed by awareness of its operation, this knowledge is indestructible and easy to act upon.

Yogeshwar Krishn has told Arjun in Chapter 2 that the seed of yog never perishes. Practising it in even a small measure provides liberation from the great fear of repeated birth and death. In Chapter 6, Arjun requested the Lord to tell him the lot of the feeble worshipper who strays from yog and is, therefore, deprived of the perception which is its final achievement. Krishn then said that the primary need is to know the way of this action (yog) after which, if a man just takes a couple of steps on it, the merit earned by them is never destroyed. He carries this sanskar along with him to the next life and by virtue of it performs the same action with every birth. Thus practising yog over many lives, he at last arrives at the state of salvation, the supreme goal. The same point is made again in the present chapter when Krishn says that although the practice of yog is easy and indestructible, faith is its indispensable requirement.

**अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परन्तप।**

**अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥३॥**

[ “Men who have no faith in this knowledge, O Parantap, do not attain to me and are doomed to roaming about the mortal world.” ]

Even the smallest bit of practice of this dharm is never destroyed, but the man whose mind is not fully centered on the object of

his worship undergoes repeated birth and death instead of attaining to Krishn. Now the Yogeshwar speaks about God's omnipresence:

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥४॥

[ "The whole world is pervaded by me, the unmanifest Supreme Being, and all beings dwell within my will but I am not in them." ]

The unmanifest form in which Krishn exists spreads through every atom of the universe and all beings have their life within him. But he is not in them because he exists in an unmanifest form. Since accomplished sages are one with the unmanifest God, they discard their bodies and act in the same divine state.

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्।

भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥५॥

[ "And even all beings are not within me, and such is the power of my yog-maya that my Spirit, the creator and preserver of all beings, is not within them." ]

Even all beings are not within Krishn, because they are mortal and dependent on nature. But such is the greatness of his yog that although he creates and sustains all beings, his Spirit is not in them. I am in the form of the Self not within those beings. This is the achievement of yog. Krishn cites an instance to elucidate the point:

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥६॥

[ "Be it known to you that all beings dwell in me just as the great wind that roams everywhere always dwells in the sky." ]

The wind is always in the sky, but cannot taint and affect its brightness. Similarly, all beings are within Krishn, but he is unblemished

like the sky. The problem of the power of yog is now resolved. So Krishn next takes up the question of what the yogi does.

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम्।

कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥

[ “All beings, O son of Kunti, attain to my nature and merge into it at the end of a cycle (kalp) and I recreate them at the beginning of another cycle.” ]

He reshapes beings with special care at the beginning of a phase. They had existed earlier, but they were misshapen. Now he gives them a more refined, more perfect shape. They who were lying in a state of insensibility, he now renders conscious. He also prompts beings to kalp in the other sense of the word. Besides “cycle of time’’, kalp also means a change for the better. It is the beginning of a kalp when, escaping from demoniacal and negative impulses, a man comes by the treasure of divinity; and it comes to a close with the worshipper’s becoming one with God. A kalp ceases to be after its purpose is achieved. The commencement of worship is the beginning, while the culmination at which the goal is perceived is its end-the point when the Soul, freed from such feelings as attachment and repulsion which effect the creation of all beings who have to be reborn, dwells in his identical, eternal form. This is what Krishn means by saying that beings merge into his nature.

But what kind of “nature” can belong to a sage who has annihilated all nature and become one with God? Does his nature still survive? As Krishn has said in the thirty-third verse of Chapter 3, all beings attain to their own nature. They act according to their predominant property; and even the sage who has achieved knowledge by direct perception acts according to his disposition. He works for the

good of those who have straggled. The conduct-the way of life - of the sage who dwells in the ultimate essence is his nature. He conducts himself according to the state of his being. At the end of kalp, men attain to this conduct-this way of life-of accomplished teacher, of realized sages. Krishn then throws further light on the accomplishment by such great Souls.

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः।

भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥८॥

[ "I repeatedly shape all these beings, who are helplessly dependent on their innate properties, according to their action.'' ]

Accepting the way of life which is given to him; Krishn continuously and with special care fashions and refashions all beings who dwell in their own nature and are dominated by the three properties: he prompts them to advance towards the state of his own Self. Does this mean, however, that he also is bound by action?

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय।

उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥९॥

[ "Unattached and disinterested in these acts, O Dhananjay, I am not bound by action." ]

According to the ninth verse of Chapter 4 a sage's way of action is unworldly. The fourth verse of the present chapter says that he works in an unmanifest way. Now Krishn says the same thing here again: that he is not attached to the actions he performs imperceptibly. Since the union of his Soul with the Supreme Spirit has bestowed a state of detachment on him, he is no longer bound by action. Since he is now abiding in the very goal that is achieved by action, he is not compelled to do it.

So far the question was of the relationship between acts of nature and the innate property-of the sage's way of life and action. Now what is that which maya creates by assuming the property that belongs to Krishn? That, too, is kalp.

**मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम्।**

**हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥१०॥**

[ "In association with me, O son of Kunti, my maya shapes this world of the animate and the inanimate, and the world revolves like a wheel of recurrence for the aforesaid reason." ]

By virtue of his spirit that permeates the whole world, this maya (the three-propertied nature, in both its eightfold insensate and conscious forms) shapes the animate and inanimate world. This is the inferior kalp and it is because of this that the world moves in its cycle of birth and death-of coming and going. This lowly kalp that nature brings about, mutable and destructive, is accomplished by maya by virtue of Krishn's innate property. It is not made by him, but the kalp of the seventh verse, which marks the commencement of the Supreme goal, is a creation of the sage himself. In this kalp he himself is the doer who creates with special care, but in the other kalp, nature is the agent which by mere reflection of its might creates the state of transience in which there is change of bodies, of time, and of ages. But although Krishn is so all-pervasive, the deluded do not yet know him.

**अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।**

**परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥११॥**

[ ''The deluded who do not know my ultimate being regard me in the human form as but an inferior mortal.'' ]

The ignorant who do not know his identity with the Supreme Spirit, the God of all beings, regard Krishn as human and therefore

paltry. He dwells in the exalted state of that Supreme Spirit who is the God of all beings, but ignorant men do not know it because he is in mortal form. They address him as a man. And they are hardly to blame. When they look at Krishn, they see only the body of the great Soul. How then are they to know that he dwells in the being of the great God? It is now explained why they are unable to realize the truth.

**अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।**

**परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥११॥**

[ "The ignorant are , like evil spirits, afflicted with the property of darkness and so their hopes and actions and knowledge are all futile.'' ]

The unaware are possessed of futile hope (which can never be fulfilled), futile action (which binds), and futile knowledge (which is really ignorance). Lying in the chasm of unconsciousness and characterized by the gullible nature of devils and demons, by demoniacal nature, they believe Krishn to be but a man. Demons and devils merely represent a property of the mind which has nothing to do with any caste or class. Men with such an inclination are unable to know the reality of Krishn, but sages know him and adore him.

**महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः।**

**भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥१३॥**

[ "But, O Parth, they who have found shelter in divine nature and know me as the eternal, imperishable source of all beings, worship me with perfect devotion.'' ]

The sages who take refuge in pious impulses, the treasure of divinity, and regard Krishn as the primal source of all beings, unmanifest and eternal, always meditate upon him with devotion only to him and without permitting the thought of anyone else into their mind. The following verse dwells upon the mode of this worship.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः।

नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥१४॥

[ “Always engaged in the recital of my name and virtues, ever-active to realize me, and constantly offering obeisance to me, devotees with a firm determination worship me with undivided faith.” ]

Abiding firmly in the observance of the act of devotion, bowing low to Krishn in homage and dwelling in him, men who know the truth endeavour to realize him and worship him with staunch devotion. They are constantly engaged in the act of remembrance and recital, which is nothing else than the yagya that has already been illumined. The same rite is here restated in brief.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते।

एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥१५॥

[ “While some worship me by gyan-yagya as the all-encompassing Supreme Spirit with the feeling that I am all, some worship me with a sense of identity, some with a sense of being separate from me (regarding me as master and themselves as servants), while yet others worship me in many a different fashion.” ]

Men who are aware of reality worship Krishn by practising the appointed Way of Discrimination or Knowledge after a due appraisal of their assets and liabilities as well as of their own strength. Some others worship him with a feeling of being identical with him-the feeling that they have to be one with him by dissociating themselves from everything that is other than him; and they devote themselves to him with the total dedication of the Way of Selfless Action. Similarly, there are many other forms of worship. In fact, however, these are all only the higher and lower phases of the same spiritual observance that is called yagya. Yagya begins with reverent service, but how is it performed? By his own

admission, Yogeshwar Krishn is himself the doer of yagya. If the sage does not act as the charioteer, the successful accomplishment of yagya is impossible. It is only by his guidance that the worshipper is able to know the stage of spiritual accomplishment at which he stands and the point on the way he has reached. Krishn then speaks about the performer of yagya.

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम्।

मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥१६॥

[ "I am the action that is undertaken, the yagya, the fulfillment of earlier resolutions, the healer, the sacred prayer, the oblation as well as the sacred fire, and I am also the sacrificial act of oblation." ]

Krishn is the doer-the agent. In truth, the power behind the worshipper who always urges him on is that of the adored God. So the worshipper's accomplishment is only a gift from him. He is also the yagya which is the appointed mode of worship. The man who tastes the nectar that is generated at the successful completion of yagya is united with the eternal God. Krishn is also the oblation, for it is in him that the endless sanskar of the past is dissolved; their ultimate resolution is provided by him. He is also the remedy that cures the malady of worldly misery. Men are rid of this ailment by attaining to him. He is also the sacred incantation that is offered to the deity, for it is he who provides the strength by which the mind is concentrated on breath. Being the one who adds to the ardour of this deed, he is also the matter which is offered as oblation. He is also the sacred fire, because all desires of the mind are burnt out in his radiant flame. And he is also the sacrificial act of yagya.

Here Krishn repeatedly speaks in the first person: "I am ... I am'' The implication of this is only that it is he who stands inseparably with the individual Self as an inspiration and leads the observance of yagya to successful completion by constant appraisal. This is named vigyan. The

most revered Maharaj Ji would repeatedly tell us that the act of devotional adoration does not begin until the revered God appears as the charioteer to restrain each single breath. We may close our eyes, engage in the act of pious adoration, and mortify the senses by severe austerities, but unless the desired God comes down to the level at which we are and stands inseparably and watchful by the Self, the essence of worship cannot be gained. This is why Maharaj Ji used to say, “If you but behold me, I shall give you everything.” It is the same as Krishn’s saying that he is the doer of all.

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः।

वेद्यं पवित्रमोंकार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥१७॥

[ “And I too am the bearer and preserver of the whole world as also the giver of rewards for action; father, mother and also the grandsire; the sacred, imperishable OM who is worthy of being known; and all Ved-Rig, Sam and Yajur.” ]

It is Krishn who supports the whole world. He is the “father” who provides, the “mother” who conceives and gives birth, and the “grandsire” who is the ancient source into whom all being also merge at last. He is worthy of being known as also the sacred OM which may also be interpreted as the Self’s resemblance to God (aham+akarah = Omkarah).

That OM (God) is identical with him and so his Self is fit for knowing. He is also the agent of the three parts of the observance of yog: Rig-adequate prayer, Sam-evenness of mind; and Yajur- the ordained yagya for union with the Supreme Spirit.

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥१८॥

[ “I am the supreme goal, the sustainer and Lord of all, the maker of good and evil, the abode and shelter of all, the benefactor who wants nothing in return, the beginning and the end, the fountainhead as well as that in whom all beings are dissolved, and also the indestructible primal energy.’’ ]

Krishn is the salvation that is the ultimate goal that everyone wishes to attain to. As the witness who stands as an onlooker and knows everything, he is the master of all beings. He is the imperishable primal cause and he is also the doom (destruction) in whom all good and evil are dissolved. He possesses all these glories. Moreover,

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥१९॥

[ “I am the sun that burns, I draw the clouds and also make them rain, and, O Arjun, I am the drought of immortality as well as death, and I am also both substance and shadow.’’ ]

He is the sun, the giver of light, and yet there are many who regard him as unreal. Such men are victims of mortality and so Krishn is also the punishment that is meted out to them.

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते।

ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥२०॥

[ “Men who do pious deeds enjoined by the three Ved, who have tasted nectar and freed themselves from sin, and who wish for heavenly existence through worshipping me by yagya, go to heaven (Indrlok) and enjoy godly pleasures as a reward for their virtuous acts.’’ ]

Although they practise all the three parts of worship-prayer (Rig), equal conduct (Sam), and union (Yajur), partake of the dim light of the moon (Rayi, the form-giving substance), rid themselves of sin, and worship Krishn by the prescribed mode of yagya, such men pray for the attainment of heaven because of which they are rewarded with mortality and have to be reborn. They worship him and also adopt the appointed mode, but they beseech for heavenly joys in return. So rewarded for their piety they go to the abode of Indr* *[*King of Gods in Hindu mythology life Zeus in Greek mythology.]* and enjoy the celestial pleasures of gods. Krishn is thus also the provider of these pleasures.

**ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं**
**क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति।**
**एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना**
**गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥२१॥**

[ "With the gradual wearing out of the merits of their piety, they go back to the mortal world after enjoying the pleasures of great heaven ; and it is thus that they who seek refuge in the desire-oriented action prescribed by the three Ved and covet joy are condemned to repeated death and birth." ]

The yagya they perform as well as its threefold means, prayer, evenness of mind, and dedication that unites, is the same, and they also seek refuge in Krishn, but they have to undergo rebirth because of their desires. So it is of the utmost importance that desire is thoroughly subdued. But what is the lot of those who are liberated from all desire?

**अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।**
**तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥२२॥**

[ “I myself protect the yog of men who abide in me with steady and undeviating faith and who worship me selflessly, constantly remembering me as God.” ]

Krishn himself bears the burden of the ardent worshipper’s progress along the path of yog. He takes upon himself the responsibility for the protection of his yog. Despite this, however, men are given to worshipping other gods.

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः।

तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥२३॥

[ “Although even covetous devotees indeed worship me in worshipping other gods, their worship is against the ordained provision and therefore enveloped by ignorance.” ]

Yogeshwar Krishn has here for the second time taken up the subject of other gods. It was in verses 20-23 of Chapter 7 that he first told Arjun that deluded men whose wisdom is ravished by desires worship other gods, and that there truly exist no such entities. It is Krishn who steadies and strengthens the faith of such worshippers in whatever it is inclined to, whether a Peepal tree, a piece of rock, some departed Spirit, or a goddess. He is also the provider of their rewards. The fruits of devotion are doubtlessly achieved by these worshippers, but the rewards they obtain are momentary and ephemeral. They are here today, but they will be consumed tomorrow after they have been enjoyed. They wear out, whereas the rewards of the true worshippers of Krishn are never destroyed. So it is only the ignorant who have been robbed of their wisdom by desire that worship other gods.

In verses 23-25 of the present chapter, Yogeshwar Krishn reiterates that they who adore other gods also really worship him, but their worship is improper because this form of devotion is not ordained. There is no power like gods and to endeavour to realize them is,

therefore, like striving for the unreal. But what exactly is wrong with the worship of other gods if it is in fact a worship of Krishn himself and also a begetter of rewards? Krishn answers the question thus:

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च।

न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥२४॥

[ "They have to undergo rebirth because they are ignorant of the reality that I am the enjoyer as well as the master of all yagya.'' ]

Krishn is the enjoyer of yagya because whatever is offered as sacrifice is dissolved in him. He is the blessedness that results from yagya and also the master of the sacred rite. But they who do not know this fall from grace. They are destroyed, sometimes caught in the trap of worship of other gods and sometimes in the web of their own desires. Until they have perceived the essence, they are deprived even of the everlasting fulfillment of their desires. What ultimately becomes of them is disclosed in the following verse:

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥२५॥

[ "Men who are devoted to gods attain to gods, worshippers of ancestors attain to their ancestors, worshippers of beings attain to the state of beings, and my worshippers attain to me." ]

Rather than really attaining to gods because they are nonexistent, their worshippers just delude themselves with fancies. They who practise ancestor-worship are trapped in the abyss of the past. Worshippers of beings end up in mortal bodies. But they who are single-mindedly dedicated to Krishn attain to him. Although yet in their mortal bodies, they truly become him. That is the identity of the worshipper with the adored God. And such worshippers never come to grief. Moreover, even the mode of this worship of Krishn is so simple:

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥२६॥

[ “I lovingly accept the offerings of leaves, flowers, fruit, and water the selfless worshipper makes to me with true devotion.” ]

This loving acceptance by Krishn of whatever offering is made to him by the earnest and devoted worshipper is the commencement of devout reverence. Therefore,-

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥२७॥

[ “You should, O son of Kunti, dedicate to me whatever you do, eat, offer as sacrifice, give as alms, and also your penance.’’ ]

Krishn will bear the responsibility for guarding the sphere of Arjun’s yog if he performs all his deeds, from the humble act of eating to the mortification of his mind and senses to shape them in accordance with the nature of his quest, with a sense of total resignation.

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः।

संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥२८॥

[ “Possessed thus of the yog of renunciation by the sacrifice of all your acts, you will be freed from good as well as evil fruits which are the shackles of action, and attain to me.’’ ]

In the above three verses, Krishn has systematically dealt with the means of accomplishment and its outcome. The three suggested ways are: first, offering of humble gifts such as leaves and flowers, fruit, and water with total devotion; secondly, performance of action with a sense of dedication, and; lastly, complete renunciation in the spirit of self-surrender. By practising them Arjun will be doubtlessly freed from the bonds of action and by this liberation he will attain to the sublime

state of Krishn. The terms “liberation” and “achievement” as employed here complement each other. Krishn then speaks about the profit that will accrue from the worshipper’s attainment of his state.

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥२९॥

[ “Although I abide evenly in all beings and there is no one who is either dear or hateful to me, worshippers who contemplate me with loving devotion abide in me and I in them.” ]

Krishn pervades all beings in an equal way, but he has a special relationship with his wholly dedicated worshippers, for they live in him and he in them. This is the only kinship he knows. The worshipper’s mind and heart overflow with Krishn’s presence and there is then no difference between the one and the other. Does it mean, however, that only the most fortunate are privileged to undertake this act of divine adoration? In Yogeshwar Krishn’s words:

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक्।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥३०॥

[ “Even if a man of the most depraved conduct worships me incessantly, he is worthy of being regarded as a saint because he is a man of true resolve.” ]

If even a man of evil deeds remembers and adores Krishn with a single-minded devotion, believing that no object or god besides Krishn is worthy of worship, he is fit to be thought of as a sage. He is not yet a saint, but there is at the same time not even the least doubt of his becoming one, for he has devoted himself to the task with real determination. So everyone, you and I all, whatever be the circumstance of our birth, are entitled to the act of worship. The only condition is that

the worshipper is a human, because man alone is capable of true resolve. Geeta is meant for the upliftment of sinners, as Krishn says–

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति।

कौन्तेय प्रति जानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥३१॥

[ "Thus he shortly grows pious and achieves eternal peace, and so, O son of Kunti, you should know beyond any doubt that my worshipper is never destroyed." ]

If engaged in devotional contemplation, even a wicked man soon grows righteous, becomes one with the almighty God, and realizes the ultimate, imperishable repose. Arjun is told to keep it in mind that Krishn's earnest devotee is never destroyed. Even if the effort somehow grows feeble, in the next life it is resumed from the very point at which it was discontinued earlier and, beginning with what was done before, the worshipper presently attains to the most sublime peace. Therefore, all men of virtuous as well as of unrighteous conduct and all others have the right to contemplate and adore. More than this,-

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥३२॥

[ "Since even women, Vaishya and Shudr, whose births are regarded as inferior , attain, O Parth, to the supreme goal by taking refuge in me...'' ]

Throwing light upon demoniacal nature, Krishn points out in verses 7-21 of Chapter 16 that they who give up sacred precepts and only pray for namesake out of conceit are the most despicable among men. They who make vain prayers which are but only nominally yagya are cruel and sinful. "Vaishya" and "Shudr" stand for, as we have seen, only different stages of the path that leads to God. Women have been sometimes honoured and sometimes denigrated, but they as well as Vaishya and Shudr have an equal right to the performance of yog. So the

teaching of Geeta is for entire mankind, for all men, irrespective of their conduct and circumstance of birth. It instructs all of us without any discrimination in what is propitious. The Geeta thus embodies a universal message.

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा।

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥३३॥

[ "It hardly needs saying that since pious Brahmin and royal sages (rajarshi) attain to salvation, you should also renounce this miserable, ephemeral, mortal body and always engage in my worship.'' ]

Let alone those men and women in the Brahmin and Kshatriya rajarshi stages, ultimate absolution is within the reach of devotees in the stage of Vaishya, and Shudr as well. Brahmin is but a particular stage of spiritual growth which is blessed with all the virtues that lead the individual Soul to the Supreme Spirit. That which incorporates the merits of peace, humble beseeching, perception, contemplation, and readiness to follow the signs from the worshipped God is the state of Brahmin. A Kshatriya who has been elevated to a sage by his pious life and austere devotion is endowed with the spirit of accomplishment, prowess, sense of authority, and a natural reluctance to withdraw from the undertaken enterprise. The yogi who have arrived at this stage of yog, it is needless to say, surely succeed in completing their journey. So Arjun, too, should renounce this joyless and transient human body to devote himself to Krishn's worship.

It is for the fourth time that Krishn has spoken here of the four varn-Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudr. He has said in Chapter 2 that there is no more profitable way than war for a Kshatriya; and subsequently added in Chapter 3 that even dying for one's inherent dharm is more desirable. In Chapter 4 he said that he is the creator of the four varn. It is meant by this, as it has been repeatedly stressed, that

he has divided action into four phases on the basis of their innate properties. Performance of yagya is the one appointed task and they who do it belong to four categories. At the point at which a worshipper is initiated into the way, he is a Shudr because of his inadequate knowledge. When he has developed a partial capacity for accomplishment and accumulated some spiritual wealth, the same worshipper turns into a Vaishya. Ascending yet higher and acquiring the strength to carve his way through the three properties of nature, he becomes a worshipper of the Kshatriya class. And the same worshipper is elevated to the rank of a Brahmin when he is infused with the qualities that unite the Soul with God. Kshatriya and Brahmin worshippers are nearer to attainment than the Vaishya and Shudr. Since even the latter are assured of the final bliss, there is hardly any need to speak anything of the lot of worshippers who have achieved a higher status.

Also, the Upanishad, of which the Geeta is an abstract, abound in allusions to women who were endowed with the sublime knowledge of God. Even all the strenuous but futile attempts to codify the rights and prohibitions derived from the spiritually timid and conventional study of the part of Ved known as the Work cannot make us ignore the unambiguous ,assertion by Krishn that women as well as men can also participate in the ordained action of performing the worship that is named yagya. So it is but proper that his last words to Arjun in the chapter are words of encouragement for carrying out the deed of worship with firm devotion.

**मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।**

**मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥३४॥**

[ “If, taking refuge in and with a total devotion of the Self to me, you contemplate, remember with humble reverence, and worship only me (Vasudev), you will attain to me.” ]

Remembering none except Krishn and restraining the mind from having any thought that is not of him, firm devotion, incessant meditation and recital with humble reverence, and a total absorption of the Soul in him, are the prerequisite for Arjun as well as any other worshipper's realizing the immutable, eternal Supreme Spirit within him.

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Addressing Arjun as a sinless devotee, Krishn has told him at the beginning of the chapter that he would elaborate and demonstrate to him the mysterious knowledge of God, blessed with which he would break with this world of misery, and after knowing which there will remain nothing else for him to know. With this knowledge he will be liberated from the bonds of the world. So this knowledge is the king of all learning. Real knowledge is that which provides access to the Supreme Spirit and is surely propitious. It is also "secret teaching" because it reveals the inscrutable magnificence of God.

It is transparently fruitful, easy of practice, and imperishable. If we succeed in practising even a little of it, it brings freedom from the great fear of recurrent birth and death. Practised in even a small measure, the merit earned from it is never destroyed and by virtue of it the doer succeeds in finally arriving at the supreme goal. But there is a condition to this attainment. Rather than achieve the final bliss, the man who is devoid of faith gropes about in the vicious maze of worldly life.

Yogeshwar Krishn has also in the chapter discoursed on the greatness of yog. Getting away from the fraternity of grief is yog. That which is completely rid of both attachment and aversion to the world is yog. Yog is the name of union with the sublime essence that God is. Attainment to that God is the culmination of yog. Arjun has been told to keep in mind the authority of the sage who has been initiated into yog. Since Krishn is such a yogi, although he is the creator and sustainer of all beings, his Spirit Is not in them. He dwells in the identical Supreme

Spirit and so he has become him. As the wind sweeping through the sky cannot sully its brightness, even so, although all beings are within Krishn, he is unattached to them.

Krishn shapes and refines beings with special care at the beginning of kalp and at its completion all these beings attain to his innate nature or, in other words, to the yog-endowed sage's way of life and unmanifest existence. Such a sage goes beyond the sway of nature after the moment of perception and yet, although constantly dwelling in his Self, he works for the good of mankind. This is the sage's way of life and the conduct of this way of life is the nature of a sage.

While Krishn is the creator who stirs beings to Self-improvement, the other creator is the three-propertied nature which in association with him brings forth the world of the animate and the inanimate. This, too, is kalp that is characterized by a constant change of bodies, of properties, and of time. Goswami Tulsidas has represented the same as that fathomless, dark pit of worldly life in which all beings lie in wickedness and terrible misery. Nature is divided into knowledge and ignorance. Ignorance is evil and sorrowful and, helplessly spurred by it, a being dwells like a prisoner. Thwarted by ignorance, he is hemmed in by time, action, and the natural properties. Opposed to it is the yog-maya, the maya of knowledge, of which Krishn himself is the creator. It is this yog-maya that fashions the world and the properties of nature are dependent upon this power. The quality of doing good belongs to God alone. While there is no excellence in nature which is not perishable, it is the awareness of God in knowledge that stirs beings to strive towards his state of perfection.

Thus there are two kinds of kalp. One of them is the cycle of change of object, body, and time-rendered by nature in conjunction with Krishn. But the other higher kalp, which bestows refinement on the Soul, is fashioned by accomplished sages; it is they who instill consciousness

into the inert nature of beings. Commencement of worship is the beginning of this kalp, whereas the successful completion of worship marks its close, with which the malady of worldly misery is cured and replaced by a total absorption in God. At this point the yogi attains to Krishn's way of life as well as state. The sage's way of life after attainment is his nature.

Sacred texts tell us that a kalp is completed only with the passing away of the four ages (yug), after which there is the phenomenon of total dissolution known as doom. This is, however, a misrepresentation of the truth. Yug also means "two." Yug-dharm* *[*See the exposition of verse 8 in chapter 4.]* persists so long as we are away from the worshipped God and he is away from us. Goswami Tulsidas has referred to this in the "Uttar Kand" of his Ram Charit Manas. So long as the property of ignorance and darkness (tamas) predominates and there is only as insignificant presence of rajas, there are malice and contradictions all around. A man living in this state may be said to belong to Kaliyug. He is unable to contemplate God and worship him. But there is a change of age, of yug, with the commencement of worship. Now the property of rajas begins to grow, tamas is gradually weakened, and there emerge even some traces of sattwa in the worshipper's disposition. This is the stage at which he swings between happiness and fear, and with this the worshipper enters into the second age of Dwapar. Gradually, then, as the property of sattwa grows plentiful and only a little of rajas remains, the inclination to the act of worship grows progressively stronger. This is the third age, Treta, in which the worshipper practises renunciation through the performance of yagya. At this point there is inculcated in him the capacity for recitation at the level of yagya, whose strength and weakness, rise and fall, depend upon the control of breath. When only sattwa remains and all conflicts are overcome, and along with this there is poise of mind, there is then the age of achievement-the domination of Satyug. At this

stage the yogi's knowledge is on the verge of transformation into practical experience because he is now close to perfection. Now he has the capacity to spontaneously hold himself in the state of meditation.

Men of discrimination understand the changes, the rise and fall, of yug-dharm.. They give up unrighteousness to restrain the mind and engage in piety. When the restrained mind, too, is dissolved, the kalp along with its different ages comes to a close. After bringing about the union with perfection, the kalp also ceases. This is the "doom" in which nature is dissolved in the Soul. After this, the sage's way of life is his innate quality-his nature.

Yogeshwar Krishn has then told Arjun that ignorant men do not know him. They regard even him, the God of gods, as of no importance and as a mere mortal. This ironic situation of being ignored by contemporaries has faced every great sage. They have even been castigated and Krishn was no exception to this. Although he dwells in the Supreme Being he has a human body, because of which the ignorant contemptuously address him as a trivial mortal. The hopes and actions and knowledge of such men are all futile. They are the ones who erroneously believe that they are doers of selfless action just by saying that they are so, irrespective of whatever they do. These men of demoniacal inclination are unable to recognize the reality of Krishn. But they who have acquired the treasure of divinity know and worship him. They always think of and remember his excellence.

There are two ways of intense devotion-of the one true action. The first is the yagya of knowledge, the way on which the worshipper treads relying upon his own strength and after a careful review of his capacity. The other way is that on which the worshipper views the relationship between God and himself as akin to that between master and servant, and in which the prescribed action is entered upon with a sense of surrender to the accomplished teacher. These are the two

points of view with which people worship Krishn. But the yagya they accomplish, the sacrifices they make, the performer, and the faith-the remedy that cures the malady of worldly existence, are all Krishn himself. He is also the supreme goal that the worshipper aims at achieving at last.

This yagya is performed by means of prayer, rituals, and procedures that are designed to bring about equanimity in the practitioner. There are worshippers, however, who adopt these means but desire heaven in return, and that is what Krishn bestows upon them. By the dint of their pious acts they dwell in the celestial world of Indr and enjoy it for long. But when the earned merit is gradually worn out, they have to come back to the mortal world and undergo re-birth. Their action was right and yet they are condemned to recurrent birth because of their desire. So total liberation from desire is a primary necessity. The yog of those who remember and contemplate Krishn with perfect concentration, with the feeling that there is nothing else to desire except him, and in whose act of worship there is not even the least flaw, is protected by Krishn himself.

Despite all this, men worship other gods. In fact, in worshipping even other gods they worship Krishn himself, but this mode of worship is not ordained. They are unaware that he is the enjoyer of their yagya-their sacrifices and so, although they worship, they fail to realize him. They thus fail in their quest. They only succeed in attaining to the fancied forms of gods, beings, and ancestors, whereas men who are truly devoted to Krishn dwell directly in him and assume his own being.

Krishn has represented the act of yagya as easy to practice. Whatever his worshippers offer him, he accepts. So Arjun is advised to surrender all his devotional acts to Krishn. When he is completely detached, endowed with yog, and freed from the bonds of action, he will know salvation which also is Krishn himself.

All beings are his, but there is no one whom he loves and no one whom he abhors. Yet, however, he dwells in his earnest devotee and that devotee in him. Even the most wicked and sinful man who worships him with total dedication is worthy of being regarded as a saint, because his steady resolve will soon unite him with the Supreme Spirit and bless him with eternal peace. A true devotee of Krishn is never destroyed. Whether a Shudr, a depraved man, an aborigine, looked down on by the conventional culture, or one with whatever name he is known by, or a man or a woman, or one who had demoniacal nature and lowly birth-they all attain to the supreme glory if they take refuge in Krishn and worship him with firm intentness. So there is absolutely no doubt about the ultimate salvation of those who have reached the stage of Brahmin and royal sages (rajarshi) who are well-endowed with virtues that unite the Soul with God. Their final absolution is assured beyond any doubt, and so Arjun too should always remember and be reverent to Krishn. If he seeks shelter under him, he will attain to him and thus secure a state from which there is no going back.

Thus, in the present chapter, Krishn has dwelt upon the spiritual knowledge which he himself brings to the state of consciousness. This is the sovereign knowledge which is, after it has been once awakened, doubtlessly propitious.

Thus concludes the Ninth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **"Rajvidya Jagriti"** or **''Stirring to Spiritual Enlightenment''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Ninth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 10

## An Account of God's Glory

In the last chapter Krishn revealed the mysterious and definitely propitious knowledge that is the monarch of all knowledge. In Chapter 10, he again takes up the subject and asks Arjun to listen to him carefully. But what is the need of repeating something that has already been elucidated? The seeker is in fact imperfect right till the moment of attainment. The fabric of nature wears thinner as he is more and moire absorbed in his contemplation of God, and fresh visions appear before him one after the other. This is made possible through a sage's -an accomplished teacher's guidance. He does not and cannot know them by himself. In the absence of such a direction the worshipper will be deprived of the attainment of God. So long as he is even slightly removed from his ultimate goal, it is evident that a crust of nature still endures and there is an apprehension of his slipping and stumbling. Arjun is a disciple who has come under Krishn's shelter. He has begged the Yogeshwar to support him as he is his pupil who depends on him. So, for the sake of this earnest and submissive disciple Krishn speaks again on what he has already discoursed on in Chapter 9.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः।**

**यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥१॥**

[ “The Lord said, ‘Listen again, O the mighty-armed, to the mystic and compelling words I am about to speak because of my concern for the good of a beloved pupil.’” ]

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः।

अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥२॥

[ “Neither gods nor great sages know my origin, for I am the primal Source from which all of them have arisen.” ]

Krishn also declared earlier that since his origin and action are both celestial, they cannot be seen by physical eyes. So his manifestation goes unnoticed even by men who have reached the spiritual level of gods and sages. On the other hand, however,-

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम्।

असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

[ “The wise man among mortals, who knows my reality as the birthless, eternal, and supreme God of the entire world, is freed from all sins.’’ ]

The man who knows this is a man of true wisdom. In other words, a clear awareness of the omnipresent, eternal God is the knowledge that liberates one from sin and rebirth. This achievement too is a gift from Krishn:

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः।

सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥४॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः।

भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥५॥

[ “All the manifold qualities with which beings are endowed: will, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forgiveness, truth, restraint of Senses and mind, happiness and unhappiness, creation and destruction,

fear and fearlessness, as well as abstinence from the desire to harm, equanimity of mind, contentment, penance, charity, fame, and ignominy-are provided by none but me.’’ ]

Firmness of purpose, knowledge, dedication to the goal, suppression of the mind and senses, inner happiness, the pains of the spiritual way, awakening of God within the Self, total dissolution at the moment of realization, fear of the disciplining power of God, fearlessness of nature, conduct that does not degrade, equanimity in which there are no conflicts, contentment, penance in keeping with the needs of the goal, self-abnegation, and putting up equally with both honour and humiliation on God’s way-all these propensities are-of Krishn’s making. These are the qualities that characterize the way of divine contemplation. In their absence there remains only the ill-gotten hoard of devilish instincts.

**महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा।**

**मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥६॥**

[ “The seven great sages* *[*The saints who are believed to be the seven stars of the constellation named Usra Major denote the seven steps of yog.]*, the four who had been earlier than them, as well as Manu and others from whom all mankind has sprung, have all been shaped by the operation of my will.’’ ]

The seven great sages or rather the seven successive stages of yog-virtuous aspiration, discrimination, refinement of spirit, inclination to truth, disinterestedness, advancement on the spiritual path towards union with God and along with them the moulding of the four faculties of mind, intellect, thought and ego in accordance with the demands of yog, are all creations of Krishn’s will. That is to say that they all arise from the determination to realize him. Each of them complements the other. All these components of the treasure of divinity are Krishn’s works. This treasure is dependent on the evolution of the seven steps of yog and without them it cannot be.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्वतः।

सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥७॥

[ “The one who knows the reality of my exalted magnificence and the might of my yog doubtless partakes of my nature by becoming one with me through meditation.”]

The man who learns of the excellence of yog and the glories of Krishn by direct perception is united with him and abides in him. There is not even the least doubt about this. The steady, untrembling flame of a lamp where there is no wind is an apt illustration of the subdued mind of a yogi. “Avikampen” in the verse refers to such an analogy.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते।

इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥८॥

[ “Aware of the reality that I am the source of all creation as also the motive that stirs it to effort, and possessed of faith and devotion, wise men remember and worship only me.’’ ]

It is at Krishn’s behest that the entire world is spurred to action. This implies that he is also the doer of whatever yogi do in keeping with his nature. All the yogi’s endeavours are thus only blessings from him. How it is so has been illuminated earlier. And now Krishn dwells upon how yogi constantly adore him.

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम्।

कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥९॥

[ ‘‘They who anchor their minds on me, sacrifice their breath to me, and are contented with speaking only of my greatness among themselves, always dwell in me.’’ ]

Men who devote their minds to Krishn alone without thinking of anything other than him and who dedicate themselves to him heart and

soul are always conscious of his ways. They are happy singing hymns of praise of his glories and always abide in him.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम्।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥१०॥

[ "I bestow upon the devotees, who always remember me and adore me with love, that discipline of yog by learning which they attain to none but me.'' ]

So the awakening of yog in worshippers is also a gift from God; it depends upon his assuming the role of a charioteer. The following verse points to the way by which a sage and noble teacher like Krishn blesses his devotee with the knowledge that initiates him into yog.

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥११॥

[ ''To extend my grace to them, I dwell in their innermost being and dispel the gloom of ignorance by the radiance of knowledge." ]

Krishn stands inseparably by the worshipper's Self as a charioteer to destroy spiritual ignorance. Worship does not really commence until, through a sage who has known God, the Supreme Spirit himself has not come awake in the worshipper's Soul and taken upon himself the task of guidance from one instant to another as also of restraining and disciplining him, and escorting him safely across the incongruities of nature. At this stage God begins to command from all sides. But at the beginning, it is through an accomplished sage that he speaks. If a seeker is not fortunate enough to have such a sage as a teacher, God's voice is only faintly audible to him.

The charioteer, whether he is the worshipped deity or a teacher-preceptor, or God himself, is the same. When the charioteer has awakened in the worshipper's Self, his dictates are received in four

ways. At first there is the experience that is related to gross breath: of the infusion into it of a thought that was earlier not in it. When a worshipper sits in meditation, he is confronted with a number of questions. When is his mind going to be truly absorbed? To what extent is it already absorbed? When does his mind desire to escape from nature and when has it strayed from the path? The answers to these questions are signalled every moment by the adored God through physical reflexes. Twitching of limbs is an experience related to gross breath and it appears simultaneously at more than one point even within a moment. If the mind has deviated, these signals are transmitted minute after minute. But these signals are received only if the devotee holds on to the form of the worshipped Godlike teacher with undeviating firmness. Reflex actions such as twitching of limbs are a much too frequent experience of ordinary beings because of the clash between their contradictory impulses, but these have nothing to do whatsoever with the signs that are transmitted to worshippers who are wholly dedicated to the sublime object of their worship.

The other experience is connected with the awakening of breath in dreams. Ordinary men dream according to their desires, but when a worshipper cleaves to God even dreams are transformed into divine instructions. Rather than dreaming, yogi perceive the act of becoming.

These two experiences are both preliminary. Association with a sage who has known reality, having faith in him, and rendering him even a token service suffice to bring about these experiences. But the two subsequent experiences of a worshipper are more subtle and dynamic, and they can be had only through active practice-only by really walking along the path.

The third experience is that of awakening into profound sleep. All of us in the world after all, as it were, lie immersed in slumber. We are but lying in a state of insensibility in the dark night of ignorance. And

whatever we do, day and night, is but a dream. Profound sleep here refers to the condition that follows after the stage when the memory of God flows through the worshipper so very like a perennial stream that his vision of God is permanently fixed in the mind. This is that serene and blessed mood in which the worshipper is led gently on by his affections, and in which, while the physical breath is suspended and he is laid asleep in body, he becomes “a Living Soul.” This is the state of harmony and of deep joy in which the worshipper is blessed with an insight into the very life of things. In such a condition the worshipped God transmits yet another signal, which manifests itself in the form of an image that is in consonance with the yogi’s prevailing mood and provides the correct direction, thus acquainting him with the past and the present. My revered teacher would quite often tell us that even like the surgeon who first renders a patient unconscious and then cures him by the application of a suitable remedy, God-when the flame of worship is strong and steady-imbues the devotee with awareness of the state of his faith and worship to cure his spiritual sickness.

The fourth and final experience is of the spiritual awakening that leads to evenness of breath. This is the state in which the worshipper is on par with that God whose thought he has fixed his mind on as on a tangible object. This realization arises from within the Self and once this awakening has taken place, at every moment while sitting idly or up and active, the worshipper pre-visions occurrences that shall be and thus gains omniscience. This is the state, too, in which there arises a sense of oneness with the embodied Self. This final experience is generated when the darkness of ignorance is dissipated by the light of knowledge through the agency of a timeless and unmanifest sage who has awakened in his Soul.

Arjun then speaks to Krishn:

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान्।**

**पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥१२॥**

**आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा।**

**असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥१३॥**

[ "Arjun said, 'It has been so said by even divine sages* *[*Deified saints such as Atri, Bhrigu, Pulastya, and Angiras.]* such as Narad, Asit, the sage Deval, and the great saint Vyas* *[*One of the chiranjivis or deathless sages. He is believed to be the complier of the Ved in its present form as also the author of Mahabharat, the eighteen Puran, the Brahm Sutr, and several other works.]*- that you are the radiant Being, supreme goal, and absolutely unblemished, because all of them believe you to be the Supreme Spirit who is the primeval, birthless, and all-pervasive God of all gods; and now you tell me the same.'" ]

"Radiant Being" and "birthless" are synonyms for God and the final state of perfect bliss. Arjun first refers to sages of the past who said the same. And now even divine sages like Narad, Asit, Deval, Vyas, and Krishn himself say it. The latter are all contemporaries of Arjun and he has the advantage of associating with these sages. And they all as well as Krishn affirm what was declared by the sages of yore. So-

**सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव।**

**न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥१४॥**

[ "I believe, O Keshav, all that you have told me and which, O Lord, is known to neither demons nor gods, to be true." ]

And-

**स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम।**

**भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥१५॥**

[ “Which, O Supreme Lord, O Creator and God of all beings, O God of gods and master of the world, is known to you alone.’’ ]

This truth which is known to Krishn, the creator of all beings and their God, is also made known to those Souls who are awakened and lit up by their consciousness of him. So the knowledge of worshippers is really his knowledge.

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।

याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥१६॥

[ “So you alone are capable of enlightening me well on your glories by which you pervade and dwell in all the worlds.’’ ]

Therefore-

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन्।

केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥१७॥

[ “How should I, O Yogeshwar, know you by incessant contemplation and in what forms, O Lord, should I worship you?” ]

These questions are agitating Arjun’s mind. How should he know Krishn-a yogi, how should he meditate on him, and how should he remember him?

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन।

भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥१८॥

[ “And, O Janardan, tell me again the power of your yog and your exalted magnificence, for I am not yet sated by the honey of your utterances.’’ ]

Krishn has stated briefly at the beginning of this chapter what Arjun wants to know again. Arjun begs him to elaborate the same again at greater length because his curiosity is not yet fully satisfied. Moreover, he also wishes to hear Krishn’s words just for the sake of listening to them. Such is the sweet charm of the speech of God and of sages. No

wonder according to Goswami Tulsidas, one who is satiated with listening to the chronicle of Ram is bereft of sentiment.

Until the worshipper has access to the desired God, his thirst for the substance of immortality remains. If someone sits down on the way before the point of attainment with the feeling that he knows all, he has in fact known nothing. It is evident then that his progress is about to be obstructed. So it is the seeker's duty that he holds on to directions from the adored God and turns them into practice.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।**

**प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥१९॥**

[ "The Lord (then) said, I shall now tell you of the power of my glories, for there is no end to my diverse manifestations.'' ]

After this he sets out to enumerate some outstanding instances of his numberless divine attributes.

**अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः।**

**अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥२०॥**

[ "I am, O Gudakesh, the Self that dwells within all beings, as also their primeval beginning, middle, and end.'' ]

**आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान्।**

**मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥२१॥**

[ "I am Vishnu among the twelve sons of Aditi* *[*Divinity in general. Name of the twelves divinities (suns) which are believed to shine only at the destruction of the universe.]*, the sun among lights, the god Mareechi among winds, and the sovereign moon among planets.'' ]

Aditya and the other celestial beings referred to in the verse were taken as symbols of certain inner attitudes in the time of Krishn; they are all dwellers in the sphere of the heart.

**वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः।**

**इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥२२॥**

[ "I am also the Sam among the Ved, Indr among gods, the mind among senses, and the consciousness in beings." ]

Among the Ved, Krishn is the Sam Ved, for it is he whose song begets the state of equanimity. He is the Lord Indr among gods, and the mind among senses for he is known only through restraint of the mind. He is also the power that gives beings their sense of awareness.

**रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम्।**

**वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥२३॥**

[ "I am Shankar among Rudr**[*The name of a group of gods, eleven in number, because they dwell within the ten senses and one mind, who are supposed to be inferior manifestations of Shiv or Shankar, the head of the group.]*, Kuber**[*God of wealth]* among demons and yaksh* *[*Demi-gods, described as attendants of Kuber.]*, fire among Vasu* *[*A class of eight deities who constitute the human body.]*, and the Sumeru among lofty mountains." ]

Krishn is Shankar among Rudr. Shankar-"shanka-ar''-may be understood as the condition in which there are no doubts and irresolutions. In fact, "Kuber," "fire," and "Sumeru" are all metaphors for the discipline of yog; they are all yogic terms.

**पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम्।**

**सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥२४॥**

[ “Be it known to you, Parth, that I am among priests the Chief Priest Brihaspati, Skand* *[*Another name of Kartikeya.]* among martial chiefs, and the ocean among seas.’’ ]

Among priests, who keep watch over the intellect that is like a gateway to the human body, Krishn is Brihaspati, the divine teacher of gods themselves, and so it is he who generates the treasure of divinity. Among martial commanders he is Kartikeya, renunciation of action by which the destruction of animate and inanimate worlds, total dissolution, and the final attainment of God are effected.

**महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम्।**

**यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥२५॥**

[ “I am Bhrigu* *[*One of the patriarchs created by the first Manu.]* among the great saints (maharshi), OM among words, the yagya of intoned prayers (jap-yagya) among yagya, and the Himalaya among stationary objects.” ]

Krishn is Bhrigu among great sages. He is also OM, symbol of the Supreme Spirit, among words. He is the jap-yagya among yagya. Yagya is the image of that special form of worship that enables a worshipper to be united with God. In summary, therefore, it is remembrance of the Supreme Spirit and recitation of his name. When after having crossed the Stages of two kinds of speech, the audible and the muttered, the name reaches the stage of yagya, it is then recited by neither articulated speech nor from the throat; nor even in thought; it then infuses every breath. There is then only a surging ahead unceasingly with the vision of mind in God engraved on every breath. The rise and fall, ascent and descent, of yagya, and its different stages depend upon breath. It is something dynamic-a -matter of action. Among stationary objects, Krishn is the Himalaya, cool, even, and immovable like the one God himself. At the time of doom, it is said, Manu was joined with a peak

of that mountain. The immutable, even, and tranquil God is never destroyed.

**अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः।**

**गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥२६॥**

[ I am Ashwath (the Peepal) among trees, Narad among divine sages, Chitrarath* *[*The name of a king of the Gandharv : one of the sixteen sons of Kashyap by his wife Muni.]* among Gandharv* *[*Demi-gods regarded as musicians to gods.]*, and the sage Kapil* *[*Name of the great sage who is believed to have founded the Sankhya school of philosophy.]* among men of attainment." ]

Krishn is Ashwath, the holy peepal among trees. The world, which is not even sure of living until the symbolic tomorrow, is described as an inverted Peepal tree (fig tree) whose root-God-is above and whose boughs- nature-are spread below. This is not the ordinary Peepal tree that is commonly worshipped. And it is in this Sense that Krishn calls himself Peepal among trees. Narad (nade randhrah is Narad) has, on the other hand, such a sharp awareness that he can steadily hold on to the divine rhythm arising from breath. Among Gandharv Krishn is Chitrarath, or that unique state in which the object of contemplation begins to be directly perceptible to the worshipper. Kapil is bodily manifestation. Krishn is that form as well as both the state as well as the immersion in that form, and also the divine message that is received from it.

**उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम्।**

**ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥२७॥**

[ "Know (also) that I am the nectar-born Uchchaishrav among horses, Airawat* *[*Indr's elephant.]* among pachyderms, and king among men." ]

Every object in the world is perishable and the Self alone is indestructible. It is thus that Krishn is Uchchaishrav, Indr's horse that is said to have been churned out of the nectar that came from the ocean. A

horse is a symbol of regulated motion. Krishn is the motion of the mind in its quest for the reality of the Self. He is also king among men. A great soul is in fact a king, because he wants for nothing.

**आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक्।**

**प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥२८॥**

[ "I am Vajr* *[*Thunderbolt, the weapon of Indr, said to have been formed out of the bones of the sage Dadhichi.]* among weapons, Kamdhenu* *[*A heavenly cow yielding all desires.]* among cows, Kamdev* *[*The cupid of the Hindu mythology, the son of Krishn and Rukmini.]* for procreation, and Vasuki* *[*Name of a celebrated serpent, king of snakes, said to be a son of Kashyap.]*, the king of snakes. ]

Krishn is the most formidable among weapons. Among cows he is Kamdhenu. Kamdhenu is not a cow which serves appetizing delicacies in place of milk. Among sages it was Vashisth who had Kamdhenu. Symbolically, the word "cow" stands for the senses. Restraint of the senses is an attribute of the seeker who has learnt to grasp the object of his worship. When he succeeds in moulding his senses in tune with God, his senses themselves become a "Kamdhenu" for him. With this he attains to the stage when the attainment of God is by no means beyond reach.

A seeker at this level finds nothing beyond his grasp. Krishn is also Kamdev for reproduction. However, the birth he effects is not the physical birth of a male or female child. Such procreation, by both animate and inanimate beings, goes on day and night. Even rats and ants reproduce themselves. But the generation of new life by Krishn is the generation of new situations-change from one circumstance to another-by which the inner propensities themselves are changed. Among snakes, Krishn is Vasuki, the celebrated king of snakes who is said to be a son of Kashyap* *[*In the Indian mythology he bears a very important share in the work of creation and is therefore often called Prajapati.]*.

**अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम्।**

**पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥२९॥**

[ “I am Sheshnag* *[*Name of a celebrated serpent, said to have one thousand heads, and repre- sented as forming the couch of Vishnu and supporting the entire world.]* among the nag (snakes), the god Varun* *[*God of the ocean.]* among beings of water, Aryama* *[*The king of Manes (departed ancestors).]* among ancestors, and Yamraj* *[*The God of death, regarded as a son of the Sun-god.]* among rulers.’’]

Krishn is the infinite or “Sheshnag.” Sheshnag is in fact no snake. There is a description of its form in the composition called Shreemad Bhagwat which is contemporaneous with the Geeta. According to it, Sheshnag is an embodiment of God’s vaishnavi (Vishnu) power which is stationed at a distance of thirty thousand yojan* *[*A measure of distance equal to four kosas, or eight to nine miles.]* from the earth and on whose head the earth rests lightly like a grain of mustard. This is, in truth, a picture of the force of gravity between objects which keeps the stars and planets in their respective orbits. This force winds itself around all of them and holds them like a snake. This is the infinite that holds the earth, too. Krishn says that he is that divine principle. He is also Varun, the king of amphibious beings, and Aryama among ancestors. Non-violence, truth, detachment, continence, and freedom from doubt are the five yam, moral restraints and observances. “Arah’’ represents the cutting off of the aberrations that appear in the way of their practice. Elimination of these evils brings to fulfillment the merits of action done in a previous life, which then provides liberation from worldly bondage. Among rulers Krishn is Yamraj, guardian of the restraints called yam.

**प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम्।**

**मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥३०॥**

[ “I am Prahlad* *[*According to the Padm-Puran, son of the demon Hiranya-kashipu who yet retained the ardent devotion to Vishnu which he had borne with him from a previous existence as a Brahmin.]* among daitya (demons), unit of time for reckoners, the lion (mrigendr) among beasts, and Garud* *[*Chief of feathered beings, represented as Vishnu’s vehicle, having a white face, an aquiline nose, red wings, and golden body.]* among birds.’’ ]

Krishn is Prahlad among demons. Prahlad (par + ahlad) is joy for others. Love itself is Prahlad. Attraction to God and the impatience to be one with him while one is yet dwelling with demoniacal instincts is a process that ultimately leads to perception. Krishn is the joyous love of this union. He is also time among those who are given to counting its units. This reckoning is really not of numbers and of divisions of time. Krishn is rather the progressive lengthening of time that is devoted to the contemplation of God. He is the time of incessant remembrance of God not only in the hours of wakefulness but also in sleep. Among beasts he is mrigendra, the lion or king of beasts, a symbol of the yogi who also roams about and rules in the forest of yog. Krishn is also Garud among feathered creatures. Garud is knowledge. When the awareness of God begins to grow, the worshipper’s mind itself turns into a vehicle of the adored God. On the other hand, the same mind is like a “serpent” (sarp: an epithet of Garud) when it is infested with worldly desires, stinging and hurling Souls into the inferno of mortal births. Garud is Vishnu’s vehicle. When it is blessed with knowledge, the mind also turns into a vehicle on which is borne the unmanifest Spirit that permeates every atom of the universe. So Krishn is the mind that holds and carries the worshipped God within itself.

**पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम्।**

**झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥३१॥**

[ “I am the wind among powers that refine, Ram among armed warriors, the crocodile among fishes, and the sacred Bhagirathi Ganga* *[*A name of the river Ganges.]* among rivers.’’ ]

Krishn is the invincible Ram among wielders of weapons. Ram denotes one who rejoices. Yogi rejoice in knowledge. The signals received from the God they worship are their sole pleasure. Ram symbolizes that direct perception and Krishn is that awareness.

He is also the mighty crocodile among amphibian beings and the most sacred Ganga among rivers.

**सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन।**

**अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥३२॥**

[ “I am, O Arjun , the beginning and end and also the middle of created beings, the mystic knowledge of Self among sciences, and the final arbiter among disputants.’’ ]

Among branches of learning Krishn is knowledge of the Supreme Spirit (as well as of the relation between the Supreme and the individual Soul). He is the knowledge that leads to the sovereignty of the Self. Dominated by maya, the vast majority are driven by passion, malice, time, action, disposition, and the three properties of nature. Krishn is the knowledge that takes one from this slavery of the material world into the state in which the Self is in supreme command. This is the knowledge that is called adhyatm. He is also the final verdict that resolves all disputes on the Supreme Spirit. What comes beyond this is, it is needles to say, beyond arbitration.

**अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च।**

**अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥३३॥**

[ “I am the vowel akar* *[*The first of three sounds constituting the sacred syllable OM.]* among the letters of the alphabet, dwandwa* *[*First of the four principal*

*kinds of compounds in which two or more words are joined together which, if not compounded, will stand in the same case and be connected by a conjunction.]* among compounds, the eternal Mahakal amidst mutable time, and also the God who holds and sustains all.'' ]

Besides being the first sound of the sacred OM, Krishn is also the imperishable, immutable time. Time is always changing, but he is that state-that time-which takes one to the eternal God. He is also the Omnipresent Spirit (Virat Swarup) who pervades and sustains all.

**मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम्।**

**कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥३४॥**

[ "I am the death that annihilates all, the root of the creations to be, and Keerti* *[*Both as wife of one of the seven gods and symbol of feminine qualities, she is a manifestation of God's splendour.]* among women-the embodiment of the feminine qualities of accomplishing action (keerti) vitality, speech, memory, awareness (medha), patience and forgiveness." ]

As Yogeshwar Krishn will say in the sixteenth verse of Chapter 15, all beings (Purush) are of only two kinds, the perishable and the imperishable. All these bodies which generate other beings and die are mortal. Whether male or female, they are all Purush according to Krishn. The other Purush is the imperishable Cosmic Spirit who is perceived in the state when the mind has ceased to be. This is the reason why men and women equally can attain the supreme goal. The qualities of vitality, memory, awareness, and so on pointed out in the thirty-fourth verse are all feminine in principle. Does it mean that men have no need of these qualities? In truth, the animating principle of the heart's sphere is a feminine principle. The qualities enumerated in the verse need to be inculcated in all hearts, of men as much as of women.

**बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम्।**

**मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥३५॥**

[ "And I am the Sam Ved among scriptural hymn, the Gayatri* *[*A Vedic meter of twenty-four syllables and also name of a most sacred verse recited by pious Hindus at morning and evening devotion.]* among metrical compositions, the ascendant Agrahayan* *[*The lunar month of Agrahayan which corresponds approximately to November-December of the Gregorian calendar.]* among months, and the spring among seasons.'' ]

Among the sacred Vedic texts (Shruti*) *[*The part of the Ved which is known as Shruti: known by revelation.]* that are fit to be sung, Krishn is the Sam Ved (Vrihatsam), the song that produces evenness of mind. He is the spiritual awakening in these hymns. He, too, is Gayatri* *[*The text of the prayer is given here for readers who may be interested in learning it : ॐ भूभुर्वः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि यो नः प्रचोदयात्।]* among verses. The Gayatri, it is important to realize, is a metrical composition of self-denying prayer rather than a spell or charm, the recitation of which brings automatic salvation. After straying thrice, throwing himself at the mercy of the desired God, the sage Vishwamitr addressed him as the essence that permeates the earth, all the worlds, and the Self, and entreated him to confer wisdom on him and to inspire him so that he could know his reality. So, as it may be seen, Gayatri is a prayer. The worshipper is not able to resolve his doubts by his own intelligence; he does not know when he is right or in error. So Krishn is the Gayatri by which the hapless worshipper surrenders himself to God. This prayer is doubtlessly propitious, for by this the devotee seeks refuge in Krishn. Krishn is also Agrahayan among months-the ascendant season of joy. He is the state of felicity that this month resembles.

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम्।

जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥३६॥

[ "I am the deceit of cheating gamblers, the glory of renowned men, the victory of conquerors, the determination of the resolved, and the virtue of the pious.'' ]

The idea of gambling in the verse refers to the fundamental character of nature. Nature itself is a gambler and cheat. To forsake outward show and engage in the way of private adoration to escape from the contradictions of nature is an act of "deception." But to call it "deception" is hardly appropriate, for such secretiveness is essential to the worshipper's security. It is required that the worshipper, although in possession of a heart that is lit up with knowledge, appear outwardly ignorant like a benumbed Bharat-like one who is insane, blind, deaf and dumb. Although he sees, he should show as if he knows nothing; although he hears, it should appear that he has heard nothing. The canon of worship is that it should be private and secret. Only then can he win in the gamble of nature. Krishn is the victory of winners and the resolution of men of enterprise. This was also said in the forty-first verse of Chapter 2. The determination required for yog, its wisdom, and direction are all one and the same. Krishn is the dynamic mind, and also the magnificence and enlightenment of virtuous men.

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः।

मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥३७॥

[ "I am Vasudev among the descendants of Vrishni, Dhananjay among the Pandav, Vedvyas among sages, and Shukracharya* *[*Name of teacher of the asur (demons) who were restored to life, if killed in battle, by the magical charm of his words.]* among poets.'' ]

Krishn is Vasudev, or the one who is everywhere, among the Vrishni race. He is Dhananjay among the Pandav. Pandu (father of the Pandav) is a symbol of piety; he is the one in whom virtue is awakened. Realization of the Self is the only real and lasting wealth. Krishn is Dhananjay-the one who earns and stores the treasure of Self-knowledge. He is Vyas among sages. He is the sage who has the ability to express the idea of perfection. Among poets he is Ushn (Shukr) who has in the Ved the epithet kavya attributed to him, and who also has the wisdom to lead the Soul to God.

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम्।

मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥३८॥

[ “And I am the oppression of tyrants, the wise conduct of those who aspire to succeed, silence among secrets, and also the knowledge of enlightened men.” ]

Krishn is all these,

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन।

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥३९॥

[ “And, O Arjun, I am also the seed from which all beings have sprung up, because there is nothing animate or inanimate which is without my maya.” ]

There is nothing, no being, in the whole world who is devoid of Krishn because he pervades all. All beings resemble him and are close to him. He further adds:

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परन्तप।

एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥४०॥

[ “What I have told you, O Parantap, is only a brief abstract of my countless glories.’’ ]

So Arjun should regard whatever is endowed with magnificence, radiance, and might as having come forth from Krishn. This is what he is told now.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसंभवम् ॥४१॥

[ "Know that whatever is possessed of glory, beauty, and strength has arisen from my own splendour.'' ]

Krishn concludes his revelation of the omnipresent thus:

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥४२॥

[ "Or, instead of knowing anything more, O Arjun, just remember that I am here and I bear the whole world with just a fraction of my power.'' ]

Krishn's enumeration of his manifold glories by analogy does not imply that either Arjun or anyone of us should begin to adore the beings and objects he has cited for illustration. The exercise is rather aimed at enlightening men who are inclined to the worship of other gods and goddesses as well as of objects and creatures such as trees, rivers, planets, and serpents, that they have acquitted themselves well of their duties to all these divinities, objects, and beings by just adoring Krishn alone.

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At the beginning of the chapter Krishn told Arjun that he would instruct him again in what he had also told him before because he was most dear to him. He was going to repeat the instruction, for a noble teacher's constant guidance is a necessity till the very moment of attainment. His origin, Krishn has said, is known to neither gods nor saints, because he is the primal source from which all of them are born. They do not know him because the universal state arising from

attainment of the unmanifest God can be experienced only by those who have arrived at the supreme goal. He is a man of knowledge who knows Krishn, the birthless, eternal, and supreme God of the world, by direct perception.

All the qualities that constitute the treasure of divinity such as discernment, knowledge, freedom from delusion, restraint of the mind and senses, contentment, spiritual austerities, charity, and glory-are Krishn’s creations. The seven immortal sages or rather the seven steps of yog and, preceding them, even the four inner faculties and in accordance with them the mind which is self existent, self-creator: all these attributes of dedication and devotion to Krishn, and of which the whole world is progeny-are his creations. In other words, all worshipful inclinations are shaped by him. They are generated by the grace of the accomplished teacher rather than by themselves. The man who has a direct perception of Krishn’s glories is doubtlessly worthy of merging into him with a sense of total identity.

They who know that Krishn is the root of all creation contemplate him with single- mindedness are dedicated to him with mind, intellect, and Soul, exchange thoughts of his excellence among themselves, and rejoice in him. He bestows upon the devotees, whoever think of him and adore him, that discipline of yog by learning which they at last attain to him. He does so by dwelling in their innermost being and dispelling the darkness of spiritual ignorance by the light of knowledge.

Arjun believes in the truth that Krishn is immaculate, eternal, radiant, without a beginning, and pervading every atom of the universe. This was witnessed to by great sages of earlier times and, even at Arjun’s time, divine sages like Narad, Deval, Vyas, and Krishn himself say the same. It is also true that the essence of Krishn is known to neither gods nor demons. Only that devotee knows him to whom he chooses to make himself known. He alone is capable of instructing the

worshipper in his manifold glories by which he pervades and dwells in them. So Arjun requests him to enlighten him at length on the signs of his greatness. This is correct because the worshipper's impatient curiosity to listen to his adored God should remain until the very moment of fulfillment. Beyond this he cannot go because he knows not what lies within the heart of God.

Thereupon Krishn has summarized to Arjun eighty-one manifestations of his greatness. Whereas some of them illustrate the inner qualities that are developed by initiation into yog, others illumine the glories that are earned by social achievements and accomplishments. At the end, after all this, Krishn tells Arjun that instead of knowing about him in detail, he should just remember that whatever in the three worlds is endowed with magnificence and beauty has arisen from his own radiant power.

In this chapter Krishn has thus acquainted Arjun with his manifold glories at an intellectual level so that his faith withdraws itself from all distractions and is firmly centered on his destination. But even after listening to everything and comprehending them with much splitting of hair the essence of Krishn yet remains to be known, for the path leading to him is dynamic and can be trodden only by really embarking on action.

Thus concludes the Tenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **"Vibhooti Varnan"** or **''An Account of Gods's Glory''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Tenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 11

## Revelation of The Omnipresent

In the last chapter Krishn gave only a brief account of his outstanding glories, but Arjun thought complacently that he had known enough. He, therefore, averred that after listening to Krishn's words he was rid of all his delusions. At the same time, however, as he admits in the present chapter, he is curious to know what Krishn has told him before in a more tangible form. Hearing is as different from seeing as the east is from the west. When a seeker endeavours towards his destination to see it with his own eyes, what he knows then may be quite different from that which he had visualized. So when Arjun has a direct vision of God, he begins to tremble with fear and beg for mercy. Does an enlightened man know fear? Is he left with any further curiosity? The fact of the matter is that what is known at just the intellectual level is at best vague and undefined. At the same time, however, it definitely prompts to a desire for true knowledge. So Arjun entreats Krishn.

अर्जुन उवाच

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम्।

यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम॥१॥

[ "Arjun said, 'The compassionate words with which you have instructed me in the secret and most exalted knowledge have dispelled my ignorance."' ]

What Krishn has told him of the relation between the Supreme Spirit and the individual Soul has allayed his delusions and filled him with the light of knowledge.

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया।

त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम्॥२॥

[ ''For I have learnt from you, O the lotus-eyed, not only a detailed account of the origin and dissolution of beings, but also of your imperishable glory.'' ]

He fully believes the truth of what Krishn has told him, and yet-

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर।

द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम॥३॥

[ "You are, O Lord, what you have told me, but I wish, O Supreme Being, to have a direct vision of your form in all its divine magnificence." ]

Not satisfied with what he has learnt only by hearing, he wishes to see it in a palpable form.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो।

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम्॥४॥

[ "Show me, O Lord, your eternal form if you consider, O Yogeshwar, that it is possible to see it.'' ]

Krishn does not object to this request because Arjun is his devoted pupil and beloved friend. So he readily grants his prayer and reveals his cosmic form.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः।

नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च॥५॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘Behold, O Parth, my hundreds and thousands of various celestial manifestations of different hues and forms.”’ ]

**पश्यादित्यान्वसून्रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा।**

**बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत॥६॥**

[ “See in me, O Bharat, the sons of Aditi* *[*Represented in mythology as a mother of gods who are known as Aditya, twelve in number, after her.]*, the Rudr, the Vasu* *[*The name of a class of deities, eight in number.]*, the Ashwin brothers* *[*The two physicians of gods and represented as twin sons of the Sun-god.]*, and the Marut* *[*Marut is the god of wind but in the plural form the word may be understood as meaning “host of gods.”]*, as well as numerous other marvellous forms that have not been seen before.” ]

**इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम्।**

**मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद् द्रष्टुमिच्छसि॥७॥**

[ “Now, O Gudakesh, see in my body at this one place the whole animate and inanimate world, and whatever else you desire to know.” ]

Thus the Lord continues to manifest his form through three consecutive verses, but the poor Arjun cannot see anything. He can only rub his eyes in bewilderment. Krishn notices Arjun’s predicament, stops abruptly, and says:

**न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा।**

**दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्॥८॥**

[ “But since you cannot see me with your physical eyes, I grant you divine vision with which you may behold my magnificence and the might of my yog.’’ ]

Arjun is blessed with spiritual vision by Krishn’s grace. And, in an exactly similar fashion, Sanjay, the charioteer of Dhritrashtr, is also blessed with divine sight by Yogeshwar Vyas’ compassion* *[*Cf. Chapter I,*

*in which Sanjay, the epitome of self-control, is represented as the medium through which the blind Dhritrashtr sees and hears. The mind enveloped by the pall of ignorance perceives through one who has mastered the mind and the senses.]*. Therefore, what is visible to Arjun is also seen in precisely the same form by Sanjay, and by virtue of sharing the vision he also shares the good that accrues from it.

**संजय उवाच**

**एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः।**

**दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम्॥९॥**

[ "Sanjay said (to Dhritrashtr), 'After speaking thus, O King, the Lord-the great master of yog-revealed his supreme, omnipresent form to Arjun." ]

The master of yog, a yogi himself and capable of bestowing yog upon others, is named Yogeshwar. He is, similarly, God (Hari*) *[*An epithet of the Supreme Spirit, of Vishnu and many other deities. The interpretation here refers to the association of the sound of the word with "har" which means "taking away" or "depriving."]* who seizes and carries away everything. If he only does away with grief and spares joy, grief will make a comeback. So "Hari" is one who destroys sins and has the power of conferring his own form on others. So he, who has been all the time before Arjun, now reveals his all-pervading, radiant being.

**अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम्।**

**अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम्॥१०॥**

**दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम्।**

**सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम्॥११॥**

[ "And (Arjun beheld before himself) the infinite, all-pervading God with numerous mouths and eyes, many wondrous manifestations, decked with various ornaments, carrying many weapons in his hands, wearing

celestial garlands and apparel, anointed with heavenly perfumes, and endowed with all kinds of wonder.'' ]

The marvellous sight is also rendered perceptible to Dhritrashtr, the blind king, the very image of ignorance, by Sanjay-the embodiment of restraint.

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता।

यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः॥१२॥

[ "Even the light of a thousand suns in the sky could hardly match the radiance of the omnipresent God." ]

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा।

अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा॥१३॥

[ "Pandu's son (Arjun) then saw in the body of Krishn, the God of gods, the many separate worlds together." ]

Arjun's vision of all the worlds within Krishn is a sign of his affectionate devotion which arises from virtue.

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनंजयः।

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत॥१४॥

[ ''Then overwhelmed by awe and with his hair standing on end, Arjun paid obeisance to the great God and spoke thus with folded hands.'' ]

Arjun had also paid homage to Krishn earlier, but now after having seen his divine majesty he bows deeper. The reverence he now feels for Krishn is a much profounder feeling than what he had experienced before.

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे

सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसंघान्।

ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ

मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान्॥१५॥

[ “Arjun said, ‘I see in you, O Lord, all the gods, hosts of beings. Brahma on his lotus-seat, Mahadev, all the great sages, and miraculous serpents.’” ]

This is direct perception rather than a flight of fancy, and such a clear vision is possible only when a Yogeshwar grants eyes that can see it. A concrete apprehension of reality such as this is accessible only with the proper means.

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं

पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम्।

नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं

पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप॥१६॥

[ “O Lord of all the worlds, I behold your many stomachs, mouths, and eyes as well as your infinite forms of all kinds, but, O the Omnipresent, I can see neither your end, your middle, nor your beginning.’’ ]

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च

तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम्।

पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं

समन्तादद्दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम्॥१७॥

[ “I see you crowned and armed with a mace and a chakr* *[*A sharp, serrated, disc-like weapon, believed to be the chief weapon of Visnhu.]*, luminous all over, like blazing fire and the sun, dazzling, and immeasurable.” ]

We have here an all-embracing enumeration of the glories of Krishn. Such is his celestial brightness that eyes are blinded if they try to see him. He is beyond comprehension by the mind. However, Arjun can

perceive him because he has completely surrendered all his senses to him. And he is so awed by what he sees that he resorts to flattering panegyrics, by praising some of Krishn's many qualities.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं

त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।

त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता

सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे॥१८॥

[ ''I believe that you are Akshar, the imperishable God who is worthy of being known, the supreme goal of the Self, the great haven of the world, keeper of eternal Dharm, and the universal Supreme Spirit.'' ]

These are also the qualities of the Self. He too, is universal, eternal, unmanifest and imperishable. The sage attains to the same state after his worship is brought to successful completion. That is why the individual Soul and the Supreme Spirit are said to be identical.

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य

मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम्।

पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं

स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम्॥१९॥

[ "I see you without beginning, end or middle, possessed of boundless might, innumerable hands, eyes like the sun and the moon, and a face as bright as fire, lighting up the world with your radiance.'' ]

At first Krishn reveals his numerous forms, but now he appears as one and infinite. However, what are we to make of Arjun's statement that while one eye of God is like the sun, the other is like the moon? What is required is that these words should not be taken literally. It is not that one eye of God is bright like the sun while the other is dim like the moon. The meaning of the statement is rather that both brightness such

as that of the sun and serenity such as that of the moon emanate from him: both the radiance of knowledge and the calm of tranquillity. The sun and the moon are symbols here. God shines upon the world like both the sun and the moon, and he is now seen by Arjun as infusing the entire world with his dazzling radiance.

**द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि**
**व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः।**
**दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं**
**लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन्॥२०॥**

[ "And, O Supreme Being, the whole space between heaven and earth is filled up by you and the three worlds are trembling with fear at the sight of your divine but terrible form." ]

**अमी हि त्वां सुरसंघा विशन्ति**
**केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति।**
**स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसंघाः**
**स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः॥२१॥**

[ "Multitudes of gods are dissolving in you while a host of them are fearfully extolling your name and glories with folded hands, and, repeatedly pronouncing benediction, hosts of great sages and men of attainment are singing sublime hymns in your praise.'' ]

**रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या**
**विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च।**
**गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसंघा**
**वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे॥२२॥**

[ "The Rudr, sons of Aditi, Vasu, Sadhya* *[*A particular class of cetestial beings or gods in general.]*, sons of vishwa* *[*The name of a particular group of deities.]*, the

Ashwin, Marut, Agni and hordes of gandharv, yaksh, demons and men of achievement, are all looking up at you with marvel." ]

Gods, Agni and multitudes of gandharv, yaksh and demons are looking with wonder at the omnipresent form of Krishn. They are amazed because they are unable to comprehend him. They do not in fact have the vision with which they can view his essence. Krishn has said earlier that men with demoniacal nature and the vulgar regard and address him as a petty mortal, whereas, although possessed of a human body, he really dwells in the supreme God. That is why gods, Agni and hosts of gandharv, yaksh and demons are all looking up at him with amazement. They are unable to see and grasp the reality.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं
महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम्।
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं
दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम्॥२३॥

[ "Looking at your colossus form with its many mouths and eyes, hands, thighs and feet, stomachs and dreadful tusks, O the mighty-armed, all beings are struck with terror and so am I." ]

Both Krishn and Arjun are possessed of mighty arms. The one whose sphere of action extends beyond nature is "mighty-armed." Whereas Krishn has achieved perfection in the field and arrived at its furthest extent, Arjun has been just initiated and is yet on his way. His destination is yet far away. Now when he looks at the universal form of Krishn, like others he is also awed by the incomprehensible greatness of God.

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं
व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम्।
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा

धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो॥२४॥

[ “When I look at your enormous, dazzling form that reaches right up to the sky, with its numerous manifestations, wide open mouth, and huge glowing eyes, O Vishnu, my inmost soul trembles in fear, I am bereft of courage and peace of mind.’’ ]

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि

दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि।

दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म

प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास॥२५॥

[ “Since I have lost my sense of direction and joy by beholding your faces with their frightening tusks and flaming like the great conflagration that is believed to consume the world in the event of doom, I entreat you, O God of gods, to be merciful and pacified.” ]

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः

सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसंघैः।

भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ

सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः॥२६॥

[ “And I see Dhritrashtr’s sons along with many other kings, Bheeshm, Dronacharya, Karn, even the commanders of our side and all...” ]

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति

दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि।

केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु

संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः॥२७॥

[ “Beings rushing wildly into your dreadful mouth with its terrible tusks, and some of them lying between your teeth with crushed heads.’’ ]

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः

समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति।

तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा

विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति॥२८॥

[ “Warriors of the human world are flinging themselves into your flaming mouths just as numerous rivers plunge into the ocean.” ]

Currents of rivers are furious themselves and yet they rush into the ocean. Even so multitudes of warriors are rushing into the fiery mouths of God. They are men of courage and valour, but God is like the ocean. Human strength is nothing against his might. The following verse illustrates why and how they hurl themselves into him.

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा

विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः।

तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका

स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः॥२९॥

[ “They cast themselves into your mouths for their destruction just as flying insects fling themselves into the flame.” ]

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता

ल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः।

तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं

भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो॥३०॥

[ “Devouring all the worlds with your flaming mouths and licking your lips, your intense lustre is consuming the whole world by filling it with its radiance.” ]

This is clearly a portrayal of the dissolution of unrighteous properties in God after which even the utility of the treasure of divinity is dispensed with. Righteous properties, too, then merge into the same Self. Arjun sees the Kaurav warriors and then the warriors of his own army vanishing into Krishn’s mouth. So he pleads with him.

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो

नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद।

विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं

न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम्॥३१॥

[ “Since I am ignorant of your nature, O Primal Being, and wish to know its reality, I pay my humble obeisance and pray you, O supreme God, to tell me who you are in this terrible form.’’ ]

Arjun wishes to know who Krishn is in his immense form and what he intends to do. He does not yet fully understand the ways in which God fulfils himself. Thereupon Krishn speaks to him.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो

लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः।

ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे

येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः॥३२॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘I am the almighty time (kal), now inclined to and engaged in the destruction of worlds, and warriors of the opposing armies are going to die even without your killing them.’ ”]

He further adds:

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व

जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम्।

मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव

निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्॥३३॥

[ “So you should get up and earn renown and enjoy a thriving and affluent kingdom by vanquishing your enemies, because these warriors have already been killed by me and you, O Savyasachin* *[*Arjun is so called*

*because he could also shoot arrows with his left hand.]* (Arjun), have to be just the nominal agent of their destruction." ]

Krishn has said repeatedly that God neither acts himself nor causes others to act, and does not even devise coincidences. It is only because of their deluded minds that people believe that every action is effected by God. But here we have Krishn himself getting up and saying that he has already annihilated his foes. Arjun has to do nothing more save merely taking the credit for this by making just a gesture of killing them. This again takes us back to his essential nature. He is the image of affectionate devotion, and God is ever inclined to help and support such loving worshippers. He is a doer for them-their charioteer.

This is the third occasion when the idea of "kingdom" occurs in the Geeta. Initially Arjun did not want to fight and he told Krishn that he could not see how his becoming an uncontested ruler of a thriving and wealthy kingdom on the earth or even an Indr-like lord of Gods could wipe out the grief that was wearing out his senses. He did not want either of these if his grief was to persist even after his achievement of these rewards. Yogeshwar Krishn then told him that in case of defeat in the war he would be rewarded with heavenly existence and, in case of victory, with attainment of the Supreme Spirit. And now he says that the enemies have already been slain by him and that Arjun has to act just as a proxy to win both renown and rulership of a thriving realm. Does Krishn mean by this that he is going to bestow upon Arjun the very worldly rewards with which he is so evidently disillusioned-the rewards in which he cannot see the end of his misery? Such, however, is not the case. The promised reward is the ultimate union with God that results from a destruction of all contradictions of the material world. This is the only permanent attainment, which is never destroyed and which is an outcome of raj-yog, the highest form of all yog. So Krishn once more exhorts Arjun to-

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान्॥३४॥

[ "Destroy, without any fear, Dronacharya, Bheeshm, Jayadrath, Karn, and the many other warriors who have already been killed by me, and fight because you will doubtlessly vanquish your foes.'' ]

Here, again, Krishn exhorts Arjun to kill the enemies who have already been destroyed by him. Doesn't this suggest that he is the doer, whereas he had said explicitly in verses 13-15 of Chapter 5 that God is a non-doer? Apart from this he will later assert that there are only five means by which both good and evil actions are executed: basis (the governing power under the auspices of which something is done), the agent (mind), the instruments or means (senses as well as disposition), efforts or exertions (desires), and providence (which is determined by actions in previous existence). They who say that God is the sole doer are ignorant and deceived. What, then, is the explanation for this contradiction?

The truth is that there is a dividing line between nature and the Supreme Spirit. So long as the influence of the objects of nature is dominant, universal ignorance (maya) is the motivating force. But, after a worshipper has transcended nature, he succeeds in gaining admission to the sphere of action of the adored God or, in other words, of the enlightened Guru. Let us not forget that in the sense of "motivator," an accomplished teacher the individual Soul, the Supreme Soul, the object of worship, and God are all synonymous. The directions received by the worshipper all come from God. After this stage, God or the accomplished Guru -arising from the Soul of the worshipper himself-is present in his heart like a charioteer who guides him on the right path.

The revered Maharaj Ji used to say, "Mark that the act of worship has not commenced adequately until the worshipper is aware of his Self and God has come down to his level. Henceforth, whatever he does is a gift from God. The worshipper then goes along the way only according to God's signals and directions. The worshipper's success is a grace of God. It is God who sees through the eyes of the worshipper, shows him the path, and so enables him at last to become one with himself." This is what Krishn means when he tells Arjun to kill his enemies. Arjun will surely win, for God himself is standing by him.

**संजय उवाच**

**एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य**
**कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी।**
**नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं**
**सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य॥३५॥**

[ "Sanjay (further) said (to Dhritrashtr),' Trembling with fear at hearing these words of Keshav* *[*A name of Vishnu (God).]* and overwhelmed by feeling, Arjun thus spoke to Krishn with folded hands and reverent humbleness.' " ]

Sanjay has seen exactly what Arjun has seen. Dhritrashtr is blind, but even he can see, hear, and understand clearly through restraint.

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या**
**जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च।**
**रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति**
**सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसंघाः॥३६॥**

[ “Arjun said, ‘It is but right, O Hrishikesh, that men rejoice in singing praises of your name and glory, demons flee helter-skelter out of fear of your glory, and accomplished sages bow to you in reverence.’ ” ]

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्

गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे।

अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास

त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत्॥३७॥

[ “What else can they do, O Great Soul, besides paying homage to you when you are, O God of gods and primal energy of the universe, the imperishable Supreme Spirit who is beyond all being and the non-being?” ]

Arjun can speak so because he has had a direct vision of the imperishable God. Just a view or assumption at the intellectual level cannot lead one to realization of the indestructible Supreme Spirit. Arjun’s vision of God is an inner, perception.

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण

स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।

वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम

त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप॥३८॥

[ “You, O infinite, are the primal God, eternal Spirit, the ultimate heaven of the world, seer, worthy of realization, the supreme goal, and the all-pervading.” ]

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः

प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च।

नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः

पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते॥३९॥

[ “As you are the wind, the god of death (Yamraj), fire, the rain-god (Varun), the moon, the Lord of all creation, and even the primal root of Brahma, I bow before you a thousand times and even more.’’ ]

So overwhelmed is Arjun by his faith and dedication that even after paying obeisance again and again he is not contented. So he continues with his tributes:

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं
सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः॥४०॥

[ “Since you possess, O the imperishable and almighty, infinite prowess and are the God who is omnipresent, you are honoured everywhere (by all).’’ ]

Thus bowing repeatedly in obeisance, Arjun begs for forgiveness for his errors:

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि॥४१॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम्॥४२॥

[ “I seek your forgiveness, O the infinite, for all the indiscreet words I might have spoken to you, for taking the undue liberty of addressing you as ‘Krishn’ and ‘Yadav’, for any disrespect I might have inadvertently shown you in the course of frivolous dalliance or repose or while eating

meals, O Achyut (infallible), or while we were together alone or with others, out of my feeling that you are my intimate friend and because of carelessness arising from my ignorance of your true magnificence.’’ ]

Arjun has the courage to beg for Krishn’s forgiveness for his mistakes because of his conviction that he is indifferent to all of them: that he will forgive him because he is father of mankind, the noblest of teachers, and truly worthy of reverent worship.

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य

त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।

न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो

लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव॥४३॥

[ “Since no one in the three worlds can even equal you, who are father of the animate and inanimate worlds, the greatest of all teachers, most venerable, and of immense magnificence, how can anyone else be superior to you?” ]

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं

प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम्।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः

प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम्॥४४॥

[ “So throwing myself at your feet and bowing to you in the humblest homage, I beseech you, O the most adorable God, to forgive my errors as a father forgives his son, a friend his friend and a loving husband his beloved wife.” ]

Arjun is convinced that Krishn alone is large-hearted enough to be indulgent to his faults. But what after all is his error? By what other name than “Krishn” could he address his dark-skinned friend? Should we

call a black man white? Is it sin to call a spade a spade? Calling Krishn a "Yadav," too, could not be wrong, because Krishn had a Yadav family ancestry. Neither was it an offence to call him a "friend," because Krishn also regards Arjun as an intimate friend. Obviously, however, Arjun is abjectly apologetic because he believes that his addressing Krishn as "Krishn" is an offence.

The way of meditation is essentially the one that Krishn has laid down. He counselled Arjun, in the thirteenth verse of Chapter 8, to recite OM and contemplate him. OM, we remember, is a symbol of the imperishable God. Arjun was told to recite the sacred syllable and visualize Krishn's image, for OM which stands for the unmanifest Supreme Being is also a symbol of the sage after he has attained to the supreme goal of God-realization. When Arjun has a clear vision of Krishn's true magnificence, it strikes him that he is neither white nor black, and not even a friend or a Yadav ; he is but a great Soul that has become one and identical with the imperishable Supreme Spirit.

In the whole of the Geeta Krishn has, on five different occasions, stressed the importance of reciting OM. If we have to pray, let us recite OM rather than the name of Krishn. Sentimental worshippers usually manage to invent some way or the other. While one of them is dismayed by controversy over the propriety or otherwise of reciting OM, another one appeals to sages, and yet another who is eager to quickly ingratiate himself with Krishn also appends Radha* *[*The name of a celebrated gopi or cowherdess loved by Krishn. This love is taken as a symbol of the union of the individual Soul with the Supreme Spirit.]* to his name. True that they do all this out of devotion, but their prayers are marked by excessive sentiment. If we have a real feeling for Krishn, we must obey his instruction. Although abiding in the unmanifest, he is always present before us even if we are unable to see him because of inadequate vision. His voice is with us, but we cannot hear it. There will be little profit in our study of the Geeta if we

do not obey him, although one advantage of such a study is always there. The man who listens to and learns the Geeta gains an awareness of knowledge and yagya, and so attains to more exalted bodies. So study is imperative.

An uninterrupted sequence of the name “Krishn” fails to materialize while we are meditating in a state of breath-control. Out of sheer emotion some men recite just the name of Radha. Isn’t it a common practice to flatter the wives of unapproachable functionaries? It is hardly surprising then that many of us believe that we can please God in the same way. So we even stop uttering “Krishn” and begin to recite just “Radha,” hoping that she will facilitate admittance to him. But how can the poor Radha do this when she herself could not be united with Krishn? So, instead of paying any heed to what others have to say, let us recite only OM. At the same time it must be admitted that Radha should be our ideal; we have to dedicate ourselves to God with the intensity of her devotion to her loved one. It is essential that we be like her, pining away in separation from Krishn.

Arjun addressed his friend as “Krishn” because that was his actual name. Similarly quite a number of worshippers recite the name of their teacher-preceptor out of sentiment. But as it has already been shown, after realization a sage becomes one with the unmanifest God in whom he abides. So many disciples ask, “When we contemplate you why should we not, O teacher, recite your name or that of Krishn instead of the traditional OM?” But Yogeshwar Krishn has made it quite explicit here that after attainment a sage is possessed of the same name as that of the Supreme Spirit in whom he has merged. “Krishn” is an appellation rather than a name for recital in yagya.

When Arjun begs for indulgence for his offences and pleads with him to revert to his usual benign form, Krishn both forgives him and

accedes to his request. Arjun’s plea for mercy is made in the following verse:

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास॥४५॥

[ “Be appeased, O the infinite and God of gods, and show me your merciful form, because although I rejoice at beholding your wondrous (all-pervading) form which I had not viewed before, my mind is also afflicted with terror.’’ ]

Till now Yogeshwar Krishn has appeared before Arjun in his omnipresent form. Since Arjun has not seen it ever before, it is quite natural that he is filled at once with joy and dread. His mind is deeply agitated. Earlier, perhaps, Arjun had prided himself on the excellence of his skill of archery and even thought himself superior to Krishn in that respect. But a sight of the Lord’s all-pervasive immensity fills him with awe. After hearing in the last chapter of Krishn’s glories, he had evidently begun to take himself as a man of knowledge and wisdom. But one who is endowed with knowledge and wisdom in the true sense is beyond any fear. The experience of a direct perception of God has in fact a unique effect. Even after a worshipper has heard and learnt everything in theory, it remains for him to gain an awareness of the reality by practice and personal experience. When Arjun has such a vision, he is overwhelmed at once by joy and dread, and his mind is shaken. So he entreats Krishn to resume his placid, compassionate form.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त
मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव।

तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन

सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते॥४६॥

[ "Since I long to see you, O the thousand-armed omnipresent God, as I beheld you earlier, wearing a crown and armed with a mace and your chakr, I pray you to resume your four-armed shape." ]

Let us see what this four-armed form of Krishn is.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं

रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात्।

तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं

यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम्॥४७॥

[ "The Lord said, 'I have compassionately revealed to you, O Arjun, by an exercise of my power of yog, my resplendent, primeval, infinite, omnipresent form which no one else has beheld before.' " ]

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै

र्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः।

एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके

द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर॥४८॥

[ "O the most distinguished of Kuru, no one else besides you in this mortal world is capable of seeing my infinite, universal form, which can be known neither by study of the Ved nor by performance of yagya, nor even by charity or virtuous deeds, or rigorous spiritual austerities." ]

If the assertions made by Krishn in the verse above as well as his assurance to Arjun that no one except him is able to see his immense, all pervading form are true, the Geeta has hardly any use for us. In that case, then, the ability to perceive God belongs to Arjun alone. On the other hand, however, Krishn also pointed out to him before that

many sages in earlier times, who concentrated on him with a mind that was free from passion, fear, and wrath and who purified themselves by the penance of knowledge, had succeeded in attaining to his form. But now he surprisingly affirms that neither has anyone known his cosmic manifestation in the past nor will anyone know it in the future. Who after all is this Arjun? Is he not a corporal frame like all of us? As represented in the Geeta, he is an embodiment of tender affection. No man devoid of this feeling could see in the past and no man devoid of this feeling can see in the future. This quality of love requires a worshipper to draw his mind from all externals and devote it to the desired God alone. Only by the ordained way can one who approaches God with love realize him. Acceding to Arjun's entreaties, Krishn now appears in his four-armed form.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम्।
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य॥४९॥

[ "Behold again my four-armed form (bearing a lotus, a conch, a mace, and my chakr), so that you are freed from the confusions and fears inspired by my terrible manifestation and think of me with (nothing but) affection." ]

संजय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा॥५०॥

[ “Sanjay further said (to Dhritrashtr), ‘After thus speaking to Arjun, Lord Vasudev again revealed his earlier form and the sage-like Krishn thus comforted the frightened Arjun by manifesting to him his placid form.’ ” ]

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन।**
**इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः॥५१॥**

[ “(Thereafter) Arjun said, ‘O Janardan, I have regained my composure and tranquillity (of mind) by seeing this your most benevolent human form.’ ” ]

Arjun had pleaded with the Lord to appear in his four-armed shape. But what does he see when Krishn accedes to his request and appears in the desired form? What else but the human form? In truth, the terms “four-armed” and “many-armed” are used for sages after they have achieved the supreme goal. The two-armed sage-teacher is very much with his loving pupil, but someone from elsewhere remembers, too, and the same sage then, awakened by the Spirit of that power, is transformed into the charioteer who guides the seeker on to the right path. “Arm” is a symbol of action. So our arms function not only externally but also internally. This is the four-armed form. The “conch,” “chakr,” “mace,” and “lotus” borne by Krishn’s four arms are all symbolic, standing respectively for an affirmation of the true goal (conch), commencement of the cycle of attainment (chakr), subduing of the sense (mace), and competence in action that is unblemished and pure (lotus). That is why Arjun views the four-armed Krishn as a human. Rather than meaning that there was some four-armed Krishn, the expression “fourarmed” is but a metaphor for the special mode of action that sages accomplish with their body as well as Soul.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम।

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः॥५२॥

[ “The Lord said, ‘This form of mine which you have seen is the most rare, because even gods ever pine for a view of it.’ ” ]

This placid, benevolent manifestation of Krishn is the most uncommon and even gods yearn to see it. That is to say that it is not possible for all to recognize a sage for what he is. The most revered satsangi Maharajji, the accomplished teacher of my revered teacher Maharajji was one such saint with a truly awakened Soul, but most of the people regarded him as a mad man. Only a very few virtuous men learnt from heavenly signs that he was a sage of noble accomplishment. And only these men then grasped him with all their heart, attained to his metaphysical form, and reached the desired goal. This is what Krishn suggests when he tells Arjun that gods, who have consciously stored their hearts with the treasure of divinity, hanker after a view of his “four-armed” form. As to whether he can be known by yagya, charity or study of the Ved, Krishn states :

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया।

शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा॥५३॥

[ “My four-armed form which you have seen is beyond knowing by either study of the Ved or by penance or by charity, and not even by munificence or performance of yagya.” ]

The one way by which he may be perceived is disclosed in the following verse:

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप॥५४॥

[ “O Arjun, a man of great penance, a worshipper can know this form of mine directly, acquire its essence, and even become one with it by a total and unswerving dedication.” ]

The one way to attain to Supreme Spirit is perfect intentness, the state in which a worshipper remembers nothing besides the adored goal. As we have seen in Chapter 7, even knowledge is finally transformed into total devotion. Krishn said a little while earlier that no one besides Arjun had seen him before and no one would ever see him in the future. But he now reveals that by such single minded devotion worshippers can not only see him, but also realize him directly and become one with him. So Arjun is the name of such a wholly dedicated worshipper: the name of a state of mind and heart rather than of a person. All-absorbing love itself is Arjun. So Yogeshwar Krishn says at last:

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव॥५५॥

[ “This man, O Arjun, who acts only for my sake (matkarmah), rests on and is dedicated to me alone (matparmah), in complete detachment (sangvarjitah) and freedom from malice towards all beings (nirvairah sarvbhooteshu), knows and attains to me.’’ ]

The four essential requirements of the evolutionary discipline by which a man can achieve spiritual perfection or transcendence (of which human life is the means) are indicated by the terms: “matkarmah,” “matparmah,” “sangvarjitah,” and “nirvairah sarvbhooteshu.” “Matkarmah” means performance of the ordained act-the act of yagya. “Marparmah” is the necessity of the worshipper’s taking refuge in Krishn and of complete devotion to him. The required action is impossible to

accomplish without total disinterestedness in worldly objects and the fruits of action (sangvarjitah). The last but not the least requirement is “nirvrairah sarvbhooteshu”: absence of malice or ill-will towards all beings. Only a worshipper fulfilling these four conditions can attain to Krishn. It hardly needs saying that if the four ways urged by the last verse of the chapter are observed, the resulting state is one in which external war and physical bloodshed are simply out of the question. That is one more instance that the Geeta is not about external fighting. There is not one verse in the poem that supports the idea of physical violence or killing. When we have sacrificed ourselves through yagya, remember only God and no one else, are completely detached from both nature and the rewards of our action, and when there is no malignity in us towards any being, with whom and for what shall we fight? The four observances lead a worshipper to the stage at which he stands entirely alone. If there is no one with him, who shall he fight? According to Krishn, Arjun has known him. This would not be possible if there were even the slightest touch of malice about him. So it is evident that the war waged by Arjun in the Geeta is against fearful enemies such as attachment and repulsion, infatuation and malice, and desire and anger, that rise up in the way of the worshipper when he engages in the task of single-minded contemplation after having achieved an attitude of detachment to worldly objects as well as rewards.

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At the beginning of the chapter Arjun admitted to Krishn that his delusions were wiped out by the kind words with which he had revealed his manifold glories to him. Yet, since Krishn had said earlier that he was all-pervading, Arjun also wished to have a direct vision of his magnificence. He requested the Yogeshwar to show him his universal, imperishable form if it was within the power of his mortal eyes to behold

such a manifestation. As Arjun is his beloved friend and a most faithful devotee, Krishn gladly acceded to his request.

After having assumed his universal form, Krishn told Arjun to behold in him celestial beings like the seven immortal sages* *[*Mareechi, Angiras, Pulgatya, Pulah, Kratu, and Vasishtha. The seven sages, too, stand for the seven exercises or steps or attributes of yog, by mastering which the seeker attains to the state of ultimate accomplishment.]* and sages who had been in yet earlier times, and Brahma and Vishnu. Arjun's notice was thus further drawn to the all-pervading majesty of God. Summing up his exhortations, Krishn told Arjun how at one moment and at one place he could behold in him the whole animate as well as inanimate world, and also whatever else he was curious to know.

This enumeration by Krishn went on through three verses, from 5 to 7. But Arjun's physical eyes could see none of the glories enumerated by the Lord. All the celestial majesty of God was before his eyes, but they could only see Krishn as a common mortal. Realizing this difficulty of Arjun, Krishn paused and blessed him with the divine vision with which he could behold his true greatness. And then Arjun saw God himself before him. He had thus a direct and real perception of God. Overwhelmed by terror at what he saw, he began to entreat Krishn most humbly to forgive his wrongs which are not truly wrongs. He thought he had offended him by addressing him as "Krishn," "Yadav," and "friend." As these were no wrongs, Krishn readily showed his mercy and resumed his pleasing and benevolent form in deference to Arjun's request. He also spoke words of comfort and encouragement to him.

Arjun's calling his friend by the name of "Krishn" was no offence; Krishn had a dark complexion. Neither was addressing him as "Yadav" an indiscretion, because he did belong to the line of Yaduvanshis. If Arjun called Krishn a "friend," that too was not wrong, for even Krishn regards him as an intimate friend. These are all, in fact, instances of the

initial attitude of seekers towards great souls for whom the term “sage” has been used in the rendering. Some of them address these sages according to their appearance and shape. Some of them name them by their distinguishing attribute, while yet some others consider them equals. They fail to comprehend the essence of sages. But when Arjun at last knows the true form of Krishn, he realizes that he is neither black nor white, nor does he belong to any family or is anyone’s friend. When there is no one like Krishn, how can anyone be his friend? Or his peer? He is beyond rational comprehension. A man can know Krishn only if the Yogeshwar chooses to reveal himself to him. That is the reason behind Arjun’s apologies.

The problem raised in the chapter is, as we have seen, how we should recite his name if speaking “Krishn” is an offence. The problem was resolved as far back as Chapter 8 in which Krishn laid down the canon that worshippers should recite OM, the primal word or sound that represents the all-pervading, pre-eminent, changeless God. OM is the essence that prevails through the whole universe and which is hidden within Krishn. Worshippers were counselled to recite this sacred syllable and concentrate on the form of Krishn. Krishn’s image and OM are the keys to the success of a worshipper’s prayer and meditation.

Arjun then pleaded with Krishn to show him his four-armed form and Krishn did appear in his gentle, merciful form. He had wanted to see the four-armed form, but what Krishn reveals to him is the human form. In truth, the yogi who has attained to the omnipotent, eternal God lives in his body in this world and acts outwardly with his two hands. But he is awake in his Soul and he also wakes up simultaneously in the Soul of devotees who remember him from anywhere to act as their guide-charioteer. Arms are a symbol of action and this is the significance of the four-armed form.

Krishn has told Arjun that no one besides him had seen this form of his before and no one would be able to see it in the future. If we were to take this literally, the Geeta would appear futile. But Krishn has resolved the problem by telling Arjun that it is easy for the worshipper, who is devoted to him with single-minded faith and who remembers no one else except him, to know him and his essence by direct perception and to become one with him. If Arjun knows Krishn, it means that he is such a devotee. Affection for the worshipped God is the distilled form of devotion. As Goswami Tulsidas has said, one cannot have God without love. God has never been realized and can never be realized by a worshipper who is lacking in this feeling. In the absence of love, no amount of yog or prayer or charity or penance can enable a man to attain to God. So the sentiment of love is indispensable for final attainment on the path of spiritual evolution.

In the last verse of the chapter Krishn has pointed out the fourfold way, comprising observance of yagya-the ordained action, total dependence upon and devotion to him, detachment form worldly objects and rewards, and, lastly, absence of malevolence towards all. So it is obvious that there can be no physical war or bloodshed in the state of mind arrived at by following this fourfold way. When a worshipper has dedicated all he has to God, remembers only him and no one else, is so firmly in control of his mind and senses that nature and its objects cease to exist for him, and when he is freed from all malignant feelings, the idea of his fighting an external war is simply impossible. To achieve the supreme goal by cutting down the dreadful enemy that the world is with the sword of perfect renunciation is the only true victory after which there is no prospect of any defeat.

Thus concludes the Eleventh Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the

Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **“Vishwroop Darshan Yog’’** or **‘‘Revelation of the Omnipresent’’**.

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition of the Eleventh Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **“Yatharth Geeta”.**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 12

## The Yog of Devotion

Krishn repeatedly told Arjun at the end of Chapter 11 that his cosmic form which he had manifested to him had never been seen by anyone before and would not be seen by anyone in the future. Rather than being known by penance or yagya or charity he can be easily known and approached-as Arjun has seen him-by unwavering devotion and contemplation which is constant and uninterrupted like a stream of oil. So Arjun was exhorted to dedicate himself to Krishn and remember him; he should perform the ordained deed and better still by surrendering himself to him. Firm and single-minded devotion is the means for achievement of the supreme goal. This naturally whets Arjun's curiosity to know which one of the two kinds of devotees, they who worship the manifest God like Krishn and they who contemplate the unmanifest Spirit, are superior.

In fact, Arjun has raised this question for the third time here. He had asked Krishn in Chapter 3 why he was urging him to undertake a dreadful task if he thought the Way of Knowledge superior to the Way of Selfless Action. According to Krishn in both ways action is a necessity.

Despite this, however, if a man restrains his senses with unnatural violence and is yet unable to forget their objects, he is an arrogant impostor rather than a man of knowledge. So Arjun was counselled to do the ordained task, the deed of yagya. The mode of yagya, which is a special form of worship and which provides access to

the supreme goal, was then elucidated. What difference is there then between the Way of Knowledge and the Way of Selfless Action if the same action-the deed of yagya-has to be embarked on for both. Whereas an affectionate devotee engages in the deed of yagya after having surrendered himself and his action to the desired God, the yogi of knowledge undertakes the same action with a due understanding of his own strength and reliance upon it.

Arjun further wished to know from Krishn in Chapter 5 why he sometimes commended action done by the Way of Knowledge and at other times that done by the Way of Selfless Action in a spirit of self-surrender. He wanted to be told which of the two was better. He knew by that time that action was a common factor in both the ways. And yet he put the question to Krishn because he was faced with the problem of choosing the superior way. He was told that although seekers attain to the desired goal by going along either of the ways, the Way of Selfless Action is better than the Way of Knowledge. Without doing selfless action, a man can be neither a yogi nor truly enlightened. The Way of Knowledge is also impossible to traverse without action and it is beset with more obstacles.

Now, for the third time, Arjun asks the Lord which of the two kinds of devotees, they who are devoted to him with perfect concentration and they who go along the Way of Knowledge contemplating the unmanifest, imperishable principle, are superior.

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते।**

**ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥१॥**

[ “Arjun said, ‘Which of the two kinds of steadfast devotees, they who always worship you in your embodied form and the others who meditate

upon your imperishable, unmanifest Spirit, are superior in their mastery of yog?' '' ]

Whether they worship Krishn with self-surrender, a sense of identity with him, and with firm concentration, or they worship the unmanifest and imperishable God in whom he dwells with self-reliance rather than self-surrender, they both follow the way ordained by him. Which of the two, however, are superior? Krishn answers the question thus.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते।**

**श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥२॥**

[ "The Lord said, 'I believe them to be the most superior of all yogi who always meditate upon me with concentration and worship me (the embodied, manifest God) with true faith.'' ]

**ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते।**

**सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥३॥**

**संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः।**

**ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥४॥**

[ ''And they who restrain all their senses well, always adore the Supreme Spirit who is beyond thought, all-pervading, indefinable, filled with equanimity, immutable and immovable, and formless and indestructible , with total concentration, and who serve all beings viewing them with an equal eye, attain to me.'' ]

These attributes of God are not different from those of Krishn, but-

**क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्।**

**अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥५॥**

[ “Achievement of perfection by men who are devoted to the formless God is more arduous, because they who feel conceited because of their physical bodies find it more difficult to realize the unmanifest.’’ ]

Accomplishment is harder for worshippers who are devoted to the God who is devoid of all qualities (nirgun) because of their attachment to their physical existence. Attainment of the unmanifest, formless God is most difficult as long as a worshipper takes pride in his birth and prowess.

Yogeshwar Krishn was a Godlike accomplished teacher and the unmanifest God was manifested in him. According to him the seeker who, instead of seeking shelter under a sage, goes ahead with trust in his own strength, knowing his present situation and what it will be in the time to come, and with the awareness that he will ultimately realize his own unmanifest, identical Self, begins to think that the Supreme Spirit is no different from him and that he is “him.’’ Entertaining such thoughts and without waiting for fulfillment he begins to feel that his body itself is the real “he.” So he wanders about in the mortal world, the abode of sorrows, and at last comes to a dead end. But this is not so with the worshipper who goes ahead under Krishn’s gracious shelter.

**ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः।**

**अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥६॥**

**तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्।**

**भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥७॥**

[ “And, O Parth, I soon deliver my affectionate devotees who have set their mind on me and who, coming under my shelter and dedicating all

their action to me, ever contemplate and worship me-the manifest God-with unshaken intentness, from the abyss of the mortal world.'' ]

Krishn then prompts Arjun to such devotion and throws light upon the way by which it may be accomplished.

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥८॥

[ "There is no doubt whatsoever that you will dwell in me if you devote and apply your mind and intellect to me.'' ]

Krishn is conscious of his disciple's weakness, for Arjun has confessed earlier that he considers restraining the mind as difficult as restraining the wind, So he hastens to add:

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम्।

अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ॥९॥

[ ''If you cannot firmly set your mind on me; O Dhananjay, seek me by the yog of incessant practice (abhyas-yog).'' ]

"Practice" here means repeated drawing back of the mind from where-ever it roams and fixing it upon the desired goal. But if Arjun is incapable even of this, he should just long for Krishn-only devote himself to his worship, If all his thoughts and actions are only for Krishn, he will have the fulfillment of realizing him.

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव।

मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥१०॥

[ ''In case you are incapable of even following the way of practice, you may yet secure fulfillment by the performance of actions which are meant only for me." ]

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥११॥

[ “In case you fail to accomplish even this, abandon all the fruits of action and take refuge in my yog with a thoroughly subdued mind.’’ ]

If Arjun cannot even do this, he should give up all desire of the rewards of action as well as considerations of profit and loss, and with a sense of self-surrender find shelter under some sage with an accomplished Soul. The ordained action will then commence spontaneously under the prompting of this accomplished teacher.

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥१२॥

[ “Since knowledge is superior to practice, meditation better than knowledge, and abandonment of the fruits of action higher than meditation, renunciation is soon rewarded with peace.’’ ]

To engage in action by the Way of Knowledge is better than just the exercise of restraining the mind. Meditation is better than the accomplishment of action through knowledge, because the desired goal is always present in contemplation. Even better than contemplation, however, is the abandonment of the fruits of action, for when Arjun has given up the fruits of action and surrendered himself to the desired goal with the purpose of realizing it, the burden of his exercise of yog is borne by the adored God. So this kind of renunciation is soon followed by the achievement of absolute peace.

Krishn has so far said that the yogi who performs selfless action with a sense of self-surrender has an advantage over the follower of the Way of Knowledge who worships the unmanifest. Both of them accomplish the same action, but there are more hurdles in the way of the

latter. He bears the responsibility for his profits and losses himself, whereas the burden of the dedicated worshipper is borne by God. So he soon achieves peace as an outcome of his renunciation of the fruits of action. Krishn now enumerates the attributes of the man who attains to such tranquillity.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥१३॥

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥१४॥

[ "The devotee who has malice towards none and loves all, who is compassionate and free from attachment and vanity, who views sorrow and joy equally and is forgiving, endowed with steady yog, contented alike with both profit and loss, restrained in mind, and dedicated to me with firm conviction, is dear to me." ]

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥१५॥

[ "The devotee who does not upset anyone, nor is upset by anyone, and who is free from the contradictions of joy, envy, and fear, is dear to me." ]

Apart from these qualities, this worshipper is also one who neither agitates any being nor is agitated by any being, and who is free from joy, misery, fear, and all such distractions. Such a worshipper is beloved of Krishn.

This verse is most salutary for worshippers, for they should so conduct themselves that they do not hurt anyone's feeling. They have to be so, although others will not act in the same way. Being worldly-minded they cannot but indulge in venomous fulminations. However, whatever they say to denounce and hurt should not disturb and interrupt

the seeker's meditation. Whatever they do, his thoughts should be steadily and constantly set on the coveted God. It is his duty to protect himself from the onslaughts of men who are-as it were-intoxicated and out of their senses.

**अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः।**

**सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥१६॥**

[ "The devotee who is emancipated from desire, pure, dexterous at his task, impartial, free from sorrow, and who has achieved the state of actionlessness, is dear to me." ]

That man is pure who is liberated from desire. "Dexterous" means that he is adept in worship and meditation, the one ordained action. He is unaffected by fortune and misfortune, free from sorrow, and one who has given up all undertakings because there is left no worthwhile enterprise on which he can embark.

**यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।**

**शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥१७॥**

[ "The devotee who is neither joyous nor envious, neither troubled nor concerned, and who has given up all good and evil actions, is dear to me." ]

This is the crowning point of devotion when the worshipper is not wanting in anything that is worthy nor in possession of anything that is impious. The worshipper who has reached this stage is dear to Krishn.

**समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः।**

**शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥१८॥**

**तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित्।**

**अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥१९॥**

[ “The steady worshipper, who regards friends and foes, honour and dishonour, cold and heat, happiness and sorrow, as equal, and who is detached from the world, indifferent to slander and praise, meditative, contented with any manner of physical sustenance, and free from infatuation for the place where he dwells, is dear to me. ]

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते।

श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥२०॥

[ “And the devotees who rest in me and taste well the aforesaid nectar of dharm in a spirit of selflessness are the dearest to me.’’ ]

In the concluding verse of the chapter, Krishn adds that he loves those devotees most who take refuge in him and partake well of the aforesaid imperishable substance of dharm.

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At the close of the last chapter, Krishn told Arjun that neither had anyone seen him earlier nor would anyone see him later as he had beheld him. But one who worships him with steady devotion and affection is able to see him, know his essence, and become one with him. In other words, the Supreme Spirit is an entity who can be realized. So Arjun should be a loving devotee.

At the outset of the present chapter Arjun wished to know from Krishn which of the two kinds of devotees, they who worship him with single-minded dedication and they who contemplate the imperishable, unmanifest God, are superior. According to Krishn, he is realized by devotees of both kinds because he too is unmanifest. However, there are more painful hurdles in the path of seekers who are dedicated to the unmanifest God with a well-restrained mind. So long as the shell of the physical body remains, attainment of the formless God is painful, because this unmanifest form is attained only when the mind is thoroughly subdued and dissolved. Before that stage his body itself

stands as an obstruction in the worshipper’s way. Saying time and again-“I am.”-“I am.”-“I have to attain.”-he at last turns to his body itself. There is thus a greater chance of his stumbling on the way. So Arjun should surrender all his actions to Krishn and remember him with steady devotion, for he soon liberates from the dark chasm of the world devotees who meditate upon him with the unbroken constancy of a stream of oil, with total dependence on him, and after resigning all their actions to him. So the way of affectionate devotion is the most superior.

Arjun should aim his mind at Krishn. If he cannot thus control his mind, however, he should take to the way of constant practice. He should withdraw his mind again and again from wherever it strays and restrain it. If he is unable to do this, either, he should just engage in action. The action is only one-the deed of yagya. He should just go on doing what is fit to be done, and do nothing else. Whether success comes to him or not, he should persevere with the ordained action. If, unfortunately, he is incapable of even this, he should renounce the fruits of all action and find shelter under a sage who has known reality, realized his Self, and dwells in the Supreme Spirit. This renunciation will bring him the ultimate peace.

Thereafter, Krishn has enumerated attributes of the devotee who achieves such peace. Free from ill-will towards all beings, he is endowed with compassion and pity. Free equally from attachment and vanity, this devotee is beloved of Krishn. The worshipper who is ever absorbed in contemplation, self-possessed, and dwelling in his Soul is dear to him. The seeker who neither hurts anyone nor is hurt by anyone is dear to him. The devotee who is pure, dexterous in his task, beyond all sorrow, and who has steered his way across by renouncing all desire and good as well as evil actions, is dear to him. The steady, enlightened, and loving devotee who is equable and uncomplaining in both glory and ignominy, whose mind and senses are restrained and stilled, who is

contented with any manner of living, and free from attachment to the body in which he dwells, is dear to him.

This enumeration of the way of life of worshippers who have attained to the ultimate peace continues from the eleventh to the nineteenth verse, which are therefore of great value to seekers. Giving the final verdict at last, Krishn tells Arjun that devotees of steady faith who cast themselves at his mercy and mould their conduct with a spirit of selflessness according to the eternal, indestructible nectar of dharm which he has enunciated before, are the dearest to him. So engaging in the appointed task in a spirit of total self-surrender is the best course, because in this way the responsibility for the worshipper's gains and losses is borne by his noble teacher-preceptor. At this point Krishn also points out the attributes of sages who dwell in the Supreme Spirit and counsels Arjun to find shelter under them. At the very end, by prompting Arjun to take refuge in him, he declares himself on par with these sages.

Since ''devotion'' is said to be the most superior way in this chapter, it is appropriate to name it ''The Yog of Devotion.''

Thus concludes the Twelfth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled: **''Bhakti Yog''** or **''The Yog of Devotion''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Twelfth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 13

# The Sphere of Action and Its Knower

At the very outset of the Geeta Dhritrashtr asked Sanjay what had been done by his and Pandu's sons assembled at Dharmkshetr, at Kurukshetr, for combat. But it has not been made clear so far where that field or sphere is. It is only in the present chapter that Krishn makes a precise declaration of the location of the sphere.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते।**

**एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥१॥**

[ "The Lord said, This body is, O son of Kunti, a battlefield (kshetr) and the men who know it (kshetragya) are called wise because they have grown spiritually dexterous by perceiving its essence.'' ]

Instead of being involved in this sphere, the kshetragya dominate it. So it has been said by sages who knew and comprehended its reality.

When the body is only one, how can there be two spheres-Dharmkshetr and Kurukshetr-in it? In truth, within the one body there exist two distinct, primeval instincts. There is first the pious treasure of divinity that provides access to the Supreme Spirit who stands for the most sublime dharm. On the other hand, there are the demoniacal impulses made up of impiety which lead a man to accept the mortal world as real. When there is abundance of divinity in the realm of the heart, the body is transmuted into a Dharmkshetr (field of dharm), but it

degenerates into a Kurukshetr when it is dominated by devilish forces. This process of alternate rise and fall, of ascent and descent, operates at all times, but a decisive war commences between the two opposing impulses when an earnest devotee engages in the task of worship in association with a sage who has perceived the reality. Gradually, then, while the treasure of divinity grows, impious impulses are enfeebled and destroyed. The stage of God-realization is reached only after the complete elimination of the ill-gotten hoard of unrighteousness. And even the utility of the treasure of divinity is dispensed with after the stage of perception, for it is also then subsumed in the revered God. In Chapter 11, Arjun saw after the Kaurav also the warriors of his own army plunging and vanishing into the mouth of the all pervading God. Kshetragya is the character of the Self after this final dissolution.

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥२॥

[ "And be it known to you, O Bharat, that I am the all-knowing Self (kshetragya) in all spheres; and to me awareness of the reality of kshetr and kshetragya, of mutable nature and the Self, is knowledge.'' ]

The one who knows the reality of the sphere of the body is a kshetragya. This is vouched for by sages who have known the essence of this sphere by direct experience. Now Krishn proclaims that he too is a kshetragya. In other words, he too was a yogi-indeed a Yogeshwar. Perception of the reality of kshetr and kshetragya, of nature with its contradictions and the Soul, is knowledge. Knowledge is not mere dispute.

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत्।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥३॥

[ “Listen to me briefly on the whence and what of that sphere and its variations and properties, as well on the kshetragya and his abilities.’’ ]

The sphere of action, of life and death, is mutable because it has evolved from some cause, whereas the kshetragya is possessed of authority. It is not only Krishn who says this; other sages have also said the same.

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक्।

ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥४॥

[ “This has (also) been said in various distinct ways by sages in different scriptural verses and well-reasoned, definitive aphorisms on the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit (Brahmsutr).” ]

That is so say that Vedant, great sages, Brahmsutr, and Krishn all say the same thing. Krishn is, therefore, only saying what others have already said. Is the corporal body just what is visible of it? The question is taken up in the following verse.

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च।

इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥५॥

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥६॥

[ “Speaking briefly, mutable physical body is the aggregate of the five elements, ego, intellect, even the unmanifest, the ten sense organs, mind and the five objects of sense, as well as desire, malice, pleasure and pain, and intelligence and fortitude.” ]

Summarizing the constitution of the body which is kshetr with all its variants, Krishn tells Arjun that it is made up of the five great elements (earth, water, fire, ether, and air), ego, intellect and thought (which, instead of being named, has been called the unmanifest, metaphysical

nature), and thus throws light upon primal nature with its eight parts. Apart from this the other components are the ten senses (eyes, ears, nose, skin, tongue, organ of taste, hands, feet, genital organ, and anus), mind, the five objects of sense (form, taste, smell, sound, and touch), desire, malice, pleasure and pain, and consciousness and calm courage. The body, the gross corporal frame, is the composite of all these parts. This in brief is kshetr and the good or bad seeds sown in it sprout as sanskar. Made up of components which have evolved from a previous source or nature (prakriti), the body must exist so long as these components survive.

Let us now see the attributes of the kshetragya who is uninvolved in and free from this kshetr:

**अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम्।**

**आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥७॥**

[ "Absence of pride and arrogant conduct, disinclination to do injury to anyone, forgiveness, integrity of thought and speech, devoted service to the teacher, outward as well as inner purity, moral firmness, restraint of the body along with the mind and senses, ...'' ]

These are only some of the attributes of the kshetragya: indifference to honour and dishonour, freedom from vanity, and reluctance to hurt anyone (ahinsa). Ahinsa does not only mean desisting from acts of physical violence. Krishn told Arjun earlier that he ought not to degrade his Soul. To lead the Soul to degradation is true violence (hinsa), whereas to elevate it is non-violence (ahinsa). A man who is inclined to the amelioration of his own Soul is also actively devoted to the well-being of other Souls. It is true, though, that this virtue has its inception from not hurting others; the one is but a necessary concomitant of the other. So ahinsa, mercy, honest thought and speech, faithful

service to and worship of the teacher, purity, firmness of mind and heart, and control of the body along with the mind and senses, and-

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥८॥

[ "Disinterest in pleasures of both the world and heaven, absence of ego, constant reflection over the maladies of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain,..'' ]

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥९॥

[ "Detachment from son, wife, home and the like, freedom from infatuation, bearing with both the pleasant and the unpleasant with equanimity,...'' ]

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी।

विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥१०॥

[ "Unswerving devotion to me with a single-minded concern for yog, fondness of living in sequestered places, distaste for human society,..." ]

Fixing the mind firmly on Krishn, a Yogeshwar, or on some sage like him, so that there is remembrance of nothing else except yog and devout contemplation of nothing besides the desired goal, dwelling in solitary places, disinterest in the company of men, and-

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम्।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥११॥

[ ''Constantly resting in the awareness that is called adhyatm and perception of the Supreme Spirit who is the end of realization of truth are all knowledge and whatever is contrary to them is ignorance.'' ]

Adhyatm is knowledge of God's dominance. The awareness that is derived from a direct perception of the Supreme Spirit, the ultimate essence, is knowledge. Krishn said in Chapter 4 that the man who tastes the manna of knowledge generated by the accomplishment of yagya becomes one with the eternal God. Here, too, he says that apprehension of the reality that the Supreme Spirit is knowledge. Whatever is opposed towards it is ignorance. The aforesaid attributes such as an equanimous attitude to honour and dishonour complement this knowledge. The discussion of the problem is now concluded.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते।

अनादि मत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥१२॥

[ "I shall discourse (to you) well upon the God without a beginning or end, who is worthy of being known and after knowing whom the stuff of immortality is gained and who is said to be neither a being nor a non-being."]

Krishn promises to enlighten Arjun well on that which ought to be known and after knowing which the mortal man achieves the quality of deathlessness. The ultimate God who is without a beginning and end is said to be neither a being nor a non-being, because so long as he is removed he is an entity, but who can say what he is when a worshipper-a-sage-is assimilated in him. Now there is only a single entity and the consciousness of otherness is obliterated. In such a state God is neither an entity nor a non-entity; he is only that which is spontaneously perceived.

Krishn now elaborates the ways of this great Soul:

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥१३॥

[ “He has hands and feet, eyes, heads, mouths, and ears on all sides, because he exists pervading all in the world.’’ ]

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम्।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥१४॥

[ “Knowing the objects of all senses he is yet without senses; unattached to and beyond the properties of nature he is yet the sustainer of all; and he is also the one into whom all the properties merge.’’ ]

Devoid of senses, unattached, and beyond the properties of matter, he yet sustains all and is the enjoyer of all properties. As Krishn has said before, he is the enjoyer of all yagya and penances. All the three properties are thus dissolved in him at last.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥१५॥

[ “Existing in all animate and inanimate beings, he is both animate and inanimate; he is also unmanifest because he is so subtle, and both distant and close.’’ ]

He is all-pervading, both animate and inanimate, imperceptible because of his fineness, beyond knowing by the mind and the senses, and both close and far away.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्।

भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥१६॥

[ “The Supreme Spirit who is worth knowing, and who appears to be different in different beings although he is one and undivided, is the begetter, sustainer, and destroyer of all beings.’’ ]

Both external and inner phenomena have been indicated here: for instance, external birth and inner awakening, external sustenance and inner adherence to the beneficial yog, external change of body and

inner dissolution of all, that is, the disintegration of the causes that lead to the generation of beings, and along with this dissolution-access to the identical God. These are all attributes of that Supreme Being.

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥१७॥

[ "The light among lights and said to be beyond darkness, that God, the embodiment of knowledge, worthy of being known, and attainable only through knowledge, dwells in the hearts of all.'' ]

The awareness that comes with intuitive perception is knowledge. And by this knowledge alone can there be realization of God. He dwells in the hearts of all; the heart is his dwelling and we cannot find him if we search for him anywhere else. Therefore, it is laid down by the canon that God can be attained only through inner contemplation and conduct of yog.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः।

मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥१८॥

[ "Knowing the truth of what has been briefly said of kshetr, knowledge, and of God, who ought to be known, my devotee attains to my state.'' ]

Krishn now makes use of the terms "nature" (prakriti) and "Soul" (purush) for what he earlier described as kshetr and kshetragya.

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥१९॥

[ "Be it known to you that both nature and Soul are without beginning and end, and also that maladies such as attachment, revulsion, and all the objects that are possessed of the three properties are born from nature.'']

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥२०॥

[ “Whereas nature is said to be the begetter of deed and doer, the Soul is said to be begetter of the experience of pleasure and pain.’’ ]

Nature is said to generate deed and the agent by whom a deed is accomplished. Discrimination and renunciation are the doers of good, while passion and anger are the doers of evil deeds. On the contrary, the Soul engenders feelings of pleasure and pain. Will man always continue to suffer, we may well ask, or will he also ever be rid of it? How can one be liberated from nature and Soul when both of them are eternal? Krishn speaks of this.

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान्।

कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥२१॥

[ “The nature-based Soul experiences nature-born objects which are characterized by the three properties and it is association with these properties that is the cause of his birth in higher or lower forms.’’ ]

That means that liberation from birth and death is to be had only after the cessation of the properties of nature which prompt them. Krishn then tells Arjun how the Soul dwells amidst nature.

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥२२॥

[ “Although residing in the body, the Soul is transcendental and said to be the witness, the granter, the enjoyer, and the great God and Supreme Spirit.” ]

The Soul dwelling in the sphere of the heart is even closer than one’s hands, feet, and mind. Whether we do good or evil, he is unconcerned. He just stands as a witness-an onlooker (updrashta). When the right course of worship is taken and the wayfarer rises a little higher, the approach of the witnessing Soul changes and he becomes the granter (anumanta). Now he begins to grant and confer intuitions.

When the seeker is yet closer to the goal by further spiritual discipline, the Soul begins to support and sustain (bharta). Now he also provides the propitious yog. Then he turns into the enjoyer (bhokta) when the worship is even more refined. He accepts whatever yagya or penance is performed, and at the stage after this acceptance he is transformed into the great God (Maheshwar). He is now master of nature, but since he is master of nature it follows that nature yet abides in some part of him. At even a higher stage than this, after the Soul is endowed with the attributes of the ultimate, he comes to be known as the Supreme Spirit. Thus, although dwelling in the body, this Soul or Purush is yet transcendental-quite beyond nature. The only difference is that whereas he is a witness at the beginning, by gradual ascent after touching the ultimate he is transformed into the Supreme Spirit himself.

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥२३॥

[ "In whatever manner he conducts himself, the man who knows the truth of the Soul and nature with its three properties is never born again.'' ]

This is salvation. Yogeshwar Krishn has so far spoken to Arjun on the freedom from rebirth which is the final outcome of the intuitive knowledge of God and nature. But he now stresses yog whose mode is worship, for attainment is impossible without the accomplishment of this action.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना।

अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥२४॥

[ "While some perceive the Supreme Spirit in their heart by contemplation with their refined mind, some others know him by the yog of knowledge, and yet others by the yog of action." ]

Some men perceive the Supreme Spirit in the realm of their heart by inner remembrance and meditation. Some others engage in the same task by Sankhya Yog or the Way of Discrimination and Knowledge after a due appraisal of their strength. And yet others see him by the Way of Selfless Action. The chief means pointed out in the verse above is meditation. The Way of Knowledge and the Way of Selfless Action are the two modes of embarking on this deed of meditation and worship.

**अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते।**

**तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥२५॥**

[ “But ignorant of these ways, there are yet others who worship by just learning the truth from accomplished sages and, relying upon what they hear, they also doubtlessly steer across the gulf of the mortal world.’’ ]

So, if we can do nothing else, we should at least seek the company of accomplished sage.

**यावत्संजायते किंचित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम्।**

**क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥२६॥**

[ “Remember, O the best of Bharat, that whatever animate or inanimate being exists is born from the coming together of the insentient kshetr and the sentient kshetragya,” ]

On the state in which the final attainment is made, Krishn has this to say:

**समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्।**

**विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥२७॥**

[ “He alone knows the truth who steadily sees the imperishable God in all animate and inanimate beings that are destructible.” ]

That Soul alone apprehends reality who has a steady perception of the immortal God in the animate and inanimate beings that are

annihilated in their own special ways. In other words, he is of the state of the Supreme Spirit only after the characteristic destruction of that nature, never before it. The same idea was expressed in the third verse in Chapter 8 when Krishn pronounced that the destruction of that condition of beings which generates good or evil impressions (sanskar) is the culmination of action. Action is then complete. He means the same when he now declares that only he knows the truth who is steadily aware of the presence of eternal God in perishable animate and inanimate beings.

समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम्।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२८॥

[ "He achieves the supreme goal because, evenly perceiving the existence of the identical God in all beings, he does not himself degrade his Self." ]

He does not destroy himself because he constantly sees God as akin to his own Self. So he attains to the final bliss of salvation. Now the qualities of the accomplished Soul are pointed out.

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥२९॥

[ "And that man knows the truth who regards all action as performed by nature and his own Soul as a non-doer.'' ]

Viewing all action as accomplished by nature implies that he sees the occurrence of action only as long as nature survives. He also sees the Soul as a non-agent and thus he comes by awareness of reality.

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति।

तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥३०॥

[ “He realizes God when he sees the whole variety of beings as resting upon and as an extension of the will of that one Supreme Spirit.” ]

When a man sees the diffusion of God through all the various sates of beings and regards them as but an extension of the same God, he attains to him. No sooner is this stage reached than he realizes God. This, too, is an attribute of a sage-a great Soul-with a steady wisdom.

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥३१॥

[ “Although embodied, the imperishable Supreme Spirit is neither a doer nor tainted because, O son of Kunti, he is without beginning or end and transcending all properties.” ]

How it is so is illustrated in the following verse:

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥३२॥

[ “As the all-extensive sky is unsullied because of its subtlety, even so the embodied Soul is neither a doer nor tainted because he is beyond all the properties.’’ ]

It is further said of him:

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥३३॥

[ “The Soul illuminates the whole kshetr just as the one sun lights up the entire world.’’ ]

Then follows the final verdict:

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥३४॥

[ “They who have thus perceived the distinction between kshetr and kshetragya, and the way of liberation from the maladies of nature, with the eye of wisdom attain to the Supreme Spirit.” ]

Sages who know the difference between nature and Soul, as also the way of liberation from mutable nature, realize God.

That is to say that knowledge is the eye with which one may see the reality of kshetr and kshetragya, and that knowledge here is a synonym for intuitive perception.

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Dharmkshetr and Kurukshetr were named right at the beginning of the Geeta but they were not located, and it is only in the present chapter that Krishn points out to Arjun that the human body itself is kshetr. And the one who knows it is a kshetragya. However, rather than being entangled in it he is liberated, and he provides direction to it.

Is the body, the kshetr, only so much as we see of it? Recounting its main components, Krishn has said that it is the sum of primal nature with its eight parts, the unmanifest nature, the ten sense-organs and mind, the five objects of senses, desire, greed and passion. So long as these components survive, the body must also be in some form or the other. This is the field on which the sown seeds, whether good or bad, grow as sanskar. The one who voyages successfully across this sphere is a kshetragya. Possessed of divine moral virtue, he is the one who determines the operations of kshetr.

The present chapter is thus mainly devoted to a detailed elaboration of kshetragya. The scope of kshetr is indeed wide and extensive. To speak the word “body” is so easy but what vastness is contained within this simple expression? It is coextensive with the primal nature of the entire universe. It is coextensive with endless space. It is thus the animating principle of life and no being can exist without it. This whole universe, this world, these countries and provinces, and this

apparent human body are not even a fraction of that nature. Thus, besides kshetragya, the chapter also dwells at length on kshetr.

Thus concludes the Thirteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **"Kshetr-Kshetragya Vibhag Yog''** or **''The Sphere of Action and its knower.''**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Thirteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 14

# Division of The Three Properties

Yogeshwar Krishn has elucidated the nature of knowledge in several foregoing chapters. In the nineteenth verse of Chapter 4 he said that the ordained action, commenced well by a worshipper, grows by gradual steps and becomes so subtle that all desires and will are destroyed, and what he knows then by intuitive perception is knowledge. In Chapter 13 knowledge was defined as apprehension of the Supreme Spirit who is the end of the quest for truth. Knowledge makes its advent only after the distinction between kshetr and kshetragya, matter and spirit, is comprehended. Knowledge is not logical arguments and neither is it just the memorizing of holy texts. That state of practice is knowledge in which there is awareness of truth. The experience that is had with direct perception of God is knowledge, and whatever is opposed to it is ignorance.

Even after having dwelt upon all this, however, Krishn tells Arjun in the present chapter that he will again explain that sublime knowledge to him. He is going to repeat what he has already said. This is so because, as it has been rightly said, we should time and again turn to even well-studied scriptures. Moreover, the further a worshipper proceeds on the path of spiritual quest the nearer he goes to the desired goal and has new experiences of God. This awareness is made possible by an accomplished teacher that is, a realized sage who has attained to the Supreme Spirit and who stands inseparably with the worshipper's

Self. It is for this reason that Krishn is resolved to enlighten Arjun again on the nature of true knowledge.

Memory is a film on which impressions and influences are constantly recorded. If the awareness that takes one to the supreme goal is blurred, nature which is the cause of grief begins to be imprinted on the slate of memory. So the worshipper should constantly revise the knowledge pertaining to realization of the final goal right till the moment of attainment. Memory is alive and strong today, but the same might not be the case with progress to further stages. It is for this reason that the revered Maharaj Ji used to say, "Tell your beads at least once everyday to refresh your awareness of God. But these beads are told in thought rather than externally by audible voice.''

This is recommended for the seeker, but they who are accomplished teacher-preceptors are constantly after the seeker to acquaint him with novel situations by arising from his Soul as well as by the example of their own conduct. Yogeshwar Krishn was such a teacher-sage. Arjun who occupies the position of his pupil has beseeched him to support him. So Yogeshwar Krishn says that he will tell him again of the knowledge which is the most sublime of all knowledge.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम्।**

**यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥१॥**

[ "The Lord said to Arjun, 'I shall tell you again that supreme knowledge which is the noblest of all knowledge and, having possessed which sages have escaped from worldly bondage to achieve the ultimate perfection.''' ]

This is the knowledge after acquiring which nothing else remains to be sought for.

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥२॥

[ “They who have achieved my state by seeking shelter in this knowledge are neither born at the beginning of creation nor alarmed in the event of doom.” ]

They who are close io this knowledge and have taken refuge in it by attaining to Krishn’s state through treading the path of action are neither born nor frightened by the prospect of death, because the physical entity of the sage ceases to be at the very moment when he attains to the state of the Supreme Spirit. His body is henceforth a mere dwelling. Now which is that point up to which men are reborn? This is the question Krishn next takes up.

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम्।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥३॥

[ “Like the great Creator, O Bharat, is my eight-propertied primal nature, the womb of which I fertilize with the seed of consciousness by which all beings are shaped.’’ ]

Krishn’s eight-part primal nature, is the womb in which he sows the seed of consciousness, and all beings are born from this union of the insensate and the conscious.

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः।

तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥४॥

[ “The eightfold nature, O son of Kunti, is the mother that bears all the beings of different births and I am the father that casts the seed.’’ ]

There is no other mother except this primal nature, and no other father except Krishn. No matter who the root is, there will be births so long as there is meeting of the insensate and the conscious. But why is the conscious Self bound to insensible nature?

**सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः।**

**निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥५॥**

[ "The three nature-born properties (sattwa, rajas, and tamas), O the mighty-armed, bind the imperishable Self to the body.'' ]

The following verse throws light upon how this is effected.

**तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम्।**

**सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥६॥**

[ "Of the three properties, O the sinless, the purifying and enlightening sattwa binds one to the desire for joy and knowledge.'' ]

The virtuous property binds the Self to the body with attachment to joy and knowledge. So sattwa, too, is a bondage. As we have already seen, happiness lies in God, and the intuitive perception of that Supreme Spirit is knowledge. The man who is endowed with the property of sattwa is bound only so long as he does not apprehend God.

**रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम्।**

**तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥७॥**

[ "Know, O son of Kunti, that the properly of rajas, born from desire and infatuation, binds the Self with attachment to action and its fruits. Rajas, an embodiment of passion, inclines one to action.'' ]

**तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम्।**

**प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥८॥**

[ “And, O Bharat, know that the property of tamas, which deludes all beings, arises from ignorance and binds the Soul with carelessness, sloth, and slumber.’’ ]

Tamas binds the Self with laziness, the tendency to put off a task to the next day, and with sleep. “Sleep” here does not mean that a man possessed of tamas sleeps too much. It is not a question of the body sleeping at all. As Krishn said in the sixty-ninth verse of Chapter 2, the world itself with its ephemeral pleasures is like night in which the man endowed with the property of tamas ever toils in a state of unconsciousness of the effulgent God. This is the slumber of tamas and one who is trapped in it sleeps. Krishn now discourses on the collective form of the three properties.

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति रजः कर्मणि भारत।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत ॥९॥

[ “Whereas the property of sattwa motivates one to joy, rajas prompts to action, and tamas veils knowledge and drives one to carelessness.’’ ]

While sattwa leads one to ultimate bliss and rajas to action, tamas tempts the mind and heart to futile endeavours. However, when the properties are confined to one place and to one heart, how are they divided from each other? According to Krishn:

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥१०॥

[ “And, O Bharat, (just as) sattwa grows by overcoming the properties of rajas and tamas, tamas grows by overpowering rajas and sattwa, and the property of rajas grows by suppressing tamas and sattwa.” ]

But how should we know which property is dominant at a certain time?

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥११॥

[ ''When the mind and senses are suffused with the light of knowledge and consciousness, it should be taken as a sign of the growing strength of sattwa.'' ]

And-

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥१२॥

[ "When the property of rajas is ascendant, O the best of Bharat, greed, worldly inclination, the tendency to undertake action , restlessness, and desire for sensual pleasures arise.'' ]

What happens, however, when tamas grows dominant?

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥१३॥

[ "When there is an upsurge of tamas, O Kurunandan, darkness, disinclination to duty which ought to be done, carelessness, and tendencies that engender infatuation arise.'' ]

As tamas multiplies, there ensue the haze of ignorance (light is a symbol of God), a natural reluctance to advance towards the divine radiance, disinclination to the special ordained action, futile efforts of the mind and heart, and propensities which tempt one to the world.

What, however, is the profit of knowing the properties?

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत्।

तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥१४॥

[ "If the Soul departs when the property of sattwa is dominant, it attains to the pure worlds of the virtuous.'' ]

And-

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते।

तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥१५॥

[ “If he meets with death when rajas is presiding, he is born as (one of ) humans who are attached to action; and he is born in the form of unintelligent beings if he leaves the body when tamas is prevailing.’’ ]

So of all properties man should be endowed with sattwa. The bank of nature refunds the earned merits even after death. Now let us see its consequence.

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम्।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥१६॥

[ “While righteousness is said to be the pure outcome of action that is governed by sattwa, the outcome of rajas is sorrow, and the outcome of tamas is ignorance.’’ ]

Absolute happiness, knowledge, renunciation, and such other qualities are said to be the outcome of action inspired by sattwa. On the other hand, sorrow is the outcome of action characterized by rajas, and ignorance of action dominated by tamas.

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥१७॥

[ “Knowledge arises from the property of sattwa, greed beyond any doubt from rajas, and carelessness, delusion, and ignorance from tamas.’’ ]

What mode of existence does the generation of these properties result into?

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥१८॥

[ “Whereas they who dwell in sattwa ascend to higher worlds, they who sojourn in rajas remain in the middle (the world of men), and they who abide in the meanest of properties tamas are doomed to the lowest state.’’ ]

The current of life that is founded on sattwa flows towards the transcendental, primal God and the man with such a life attains to purer worlds. Souls who are dominated by rajas end up as common mortals. Lacking in discernment and renunciation, although they do not transmigrate into lower forms of life, they have to undergo rebirth. Ignorant and immoral men who are ruled by the rightly maligned tamas are reborn in the lowest forms. Thus the consequence of all the three properties is some kind of birth or the other. Only they who go beyond these properties are freed from the shackle of rebirth and they alone realize Krishn’s sublime state.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति।

गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥१९॥

[ “When the Soul (that is a mere witness) does not see anyone besides the three properties as doer and when he knows the essence of the Supreme Spirit who is beyond these properties, he attains to my state.’’ ]

The assumption that the three properties only duplicate themselves is not based on true knowledge. The process of accomplishment at last leads to the state in which after the perception of God no other agent except the three properties is visible, and in such a state a man goes beyond them. What Krishn has to say about this next is a proof that this is not just a flight of fancy.

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान्।

जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥२०॥

[ “Transcending the properties that are the germ of the gross, corporal body and liberated from the miseries of birth, death, and old age, the Soul achieves the ultimate bliss.’’ ]

After a man is liberated from the three properties, his Soul tastes the nectar of immortality. Thereupon Arjun puts another question to Krishn.

अर्जुन उवाच

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो।

किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥२१॥

[ “Arjun said, ‘(Tell me), O Lord, the attributes of the man who has risen above the three properties, his manner of life, and the way by which he transcends the three properties.’’’ ]

The following verses contain Krishn’s reply to the three questions raised by Arjun.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥२२॥

[ ‘‘The Lord said, ‘The man, O Pandav, who neither abhors radiance, inclination to action, and attachment that are generated respectively by the operations of sattwa, rajas, and tamas when he is involved in them, nor aspires for them when he is liberated;...’” ]

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते।

गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥२३॥

[ “(And) who, like a dispassionate onlooker, is unmoved by the properties and is steady and unshaken by dint of his realization that these properties of nature but abide in themselves;...’’ ]

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥२४॥

[ “(And) who, ever dwelling in his Self, views joy, sorrow, earth, stone, and gold as equal, is patient, and evenly regards the pleasant and the unpleasant, slander and praise;...’’ ]

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥२५॥

[ “(And) who puts up with honour and dishonour, as (also) with friend and foe, with equanimity, and who gives up the undertaking of action is said to have transcended all the properties.’’ ]

Verses twenty-second to twenty-fifth disclose the attributes of the man who has risen above the three properties so that he is unagitated, unswayed by the properties, and steady. What follows now is clarification of the means by which one is liberated from these properties.

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते।

स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥२६॥

[ “And the man who serves me with the yog of unswerving devotion overcomes the three properties and secures the state of oneness with God.’’ ]

One who worships Krishn with unwavering dedication, that is, with only the adored goal in his mind and oblivious of all other worldly memories, constantly serves him by performing the ordained action, goes well across the three properties and is worthy of being one with the Supreme Spirit. This union with God is the true kalp or cure. No one can go beyond these properties without undertaking the prescribed task with perfect intentness. So the Yogeshwar at last gives his judgement.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥२७॥

[ “For I am the one in which the eternal God, immortal life, the imperishable dharm, and the ultimate bliss all (abide).’’ ]

Krishn is the dwelling of immortal God (through a single-minded access to whom the seeker is cured of all worldly maladies), of everlasting life, of eternal Dharm, and of the unblemished pure joy of attaining to the Supreme goal. In other words, a God-oriented saint is the abode of all this bliss. Such a sage was Krishn-a yogi.

So if we are seeking for the ineffable, indestructible God, the eternal dharm, and the pure, ultimate bliss, we have to take refuge in some great Soul that dwells in the incommunicable essence. Only such a sage can enable a devotee to achieve what he is questing for.

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Yogeshwar Krishn has told Arjun at the beginning of this chapter that he will again acquaint him with that knowledge which is the most sublime of all knowledge and after knowing which sages achieve identity with him and do not have to undergo rebirth at the outset of creation. They are also not grieved over the inevitable demise of the body. They, in fact, discard the body on the very day on which they achieve Self-realization. Accomplishment is made in the course of physical life, but even the prospect of death does not affect them.

Dwelling upon the nature of that from which they are liberated, Krishn has pointed out that the eightfold primal nature is the mother who conceives, whereas he is the life-giving father; besides them there is no other mother or father. Although there may well appear some mother and father so long as the relationship of nature (prakriti) and Soul (purush), of passive matter and the active male principle, lasts, in truth nature is mother and Krishn is father.

The nature-borne properties of sattwa, rajas, and tamas bind the Soul to the body. One of these properties grows by suppressing the other two. These properties are changeable. Nature is without end and cannot be destroyed, but the consequences of its properties can be avoided. These properties influence the mind. When sattwa is plentiful, the consequence is divine effulgence and the power of perception. Rajas, characterized by passion, results in temptation to action and in infatuation. If tamas is active, sloth and carelessness predominate. If a man meets with death when sattwa is predominant, he is born in higher and purer worlds. The man who departs from this life when rajas is plentiful returns to be born again in the human form. When a man dies under the sway of tamas, he is condemned to lower births. So it is vital that men ought always to move in the direction of gradual advancement of the property of sattwa. The three properties are the real cause of some birth or the other. Since it is these properties which chain the Soul to the body, one should constantly endeavour to go beyond them.

At this Arjun asks three questions. What are the features of the man who has risen above the properties of nature? How does he conduct himself? And what is the way of transcending the three properties? Replying to the queries, after elaborating the attributes and mode of action of the man who has liberated himself from these properties, Yogeshwar Krishn at last points out the way by which one may free oneself from these properties. Thus revealing himself as the shelter of all, Yogeshwar Krishn concludes Chapter 14 with a detailed account of the three properties of nature.

Thus concludes the Fourteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **“Guntraya Vibhag Yog”** or **‘‘Division of the Three Properties’’**.

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition of the fourteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **“Yatharth Geeta”.**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 15

# The Yog of The Supreme Being

Accomplished sages have striven to explain the nature of the world by various analogies. While some have described it as the forest of worldly life, others have represented it as the ocean of mortal existence. In a different context the same has been called the river or abyss of worldly life. Sometimes it has also been compared to the hoof of a cow. Apparently they all imply that the extension of the world is only so much as that of the senses. And the stage at last comes when even this fearsome “ocean” dries up. In the words of Goswami Tulsidas, the mere naming of God dries up this ocean. Yogeshwar Krishn, too, has used “ocean” and “tree” as epithets for the world. He has said in the sixth and seventh verses of Chapter 12 that he soon delivers his loving devotees, who contemplate him-the manifest God-with firm concentration, from the gulf of the mortal world. In the present chapter he declares that the world is a tree which yogi who are seeking for the supreme goal have to cut down.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम्।**

**छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥१॥**

[ “The Lord said, ‘He who knows the Peepal (Fig) tree that the world is, with its roots above and branches below and which is said to be

imperishable, and of which Vedic verses are the foliage, is a knower of the Ved.'"]

The root of this everlasting Peepal-like world is the God above and its boughs are the nature below. A tree does not even last till the symbolic tomorrow, but the tree of the world is indestructible. Two things are immortal according to Krishn. The first of these is the everlasting world and then beyond it there is the eternal Supreme Spirit. The Ved are said to be the leaves of this tree of the world. The man who observes this tree well along with its root and is aware of its reality is an adept in the knowledge of Ved.

The man who has perceived the truth of the world-tree rather than one who has merely perused holy books, is a true knower of the Ved. Study of books only provides a motive for proceeding in that direction. It may well be asked at this point why the Ved are needed instead of leaves. Vedic verses, which generate well-being, are useful because they motivate from the very point when after a great deal of wandering about a Soul goes through his last birth which is like the final shoot of a tree. This is the turning point where the straying ceases and the seeker begins to proceed confidently towards God.

**अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा**
**गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः।**
**अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि**
**कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥२॥**

[ ''Its branches nourished by the three properties extend high and low, objects of the senses are its shoots, and its action-engendering roots stretch below to the world of men.'' ]

The boughs of sense-objects and their enjoyment, nourished and cultivated by the three properties, of the treelike world spread everywhere above and below, even going back into the earth and

sprouting new shoots.They extend from the worms and insects below to the godly state and creator above, but they can bind only those who are born as men according to their past actions. All other births are only for the enjoyment of sense-objects; only human birth is subject to bondage in keeping with action. And-

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल-
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥३॥

[ “Since its form is not to be seen here as such and it has neither an end nor a beginning, nor a secure foundation, this immensely-grown tree should be cut down with the axe of renunciation.” ]

The world-tree does not have a firm existence because it is changeable. So it has to be felled with the axe of total abandonment. It has to be cut down, not worshipped as it usually is because of the superstitious assumption that God resides in the roots of this tree and that its leaves are the Ved.

However, since this tree has grown from God’s own seed, can it be cut down? In fact, the meaning of this cutting down is escape from nature which is accomplished by renunciation. But what is to be done after the tree has been cut down?

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥४॥

[ “Then that goal should be sought for, after arriving at which one does not have to turn back again, with a sense of total submission to that primal God whence all worldly life is born.” ]

But how to effect the quest for this God? The Yogeshwar lays down that self-surrender is an essential condition for it. There should be the feeling that "I am at the mercy of God"-the Infinite Being from whom the primordial world-tree has sprouted and grown. This tree cannot be cut down without seeking shelter under him. Krishn then speaks about the signs from which one may realize that the tree has been cut down.

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥५॥

[ "Men of knowledge who are free from vanity and delusion, victorious against the evil of infatuation, ever-abiding in the Supreme Spirit, total devoid of desire, and liberated from the contradictions of joy and grief, achieve the eternal goal.'' ]

The destruction of vanity, delusion, infatuation, desire and of the contradictions of pleasure and pain is possible only by complete self-surrender to and abiding constantly in God. Only through this do men of true wisdom attain to the eternal state. The world-tree cannot be severed without this attainment and renunciation is needed up to this point. Now what is the form of that ultimate state which is achieved by renunciation?

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥६॥

[ "That after reaching which there is no return, and which is illumined by neither the sun nor the moon, nor by fire, is my supreme abode.'' ]

After this ultimate home has once been reached, there is no rebirth. And everyone has an equal right to it.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥७॥

[ “The immortal Soul in the body is a part of mine and it is he who attracts the five senses and the sixth-the mind-that dwell in nature.'' ]

Krishn now explains how it is so:

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः।

गृहित्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥८॥

[ “Like the wind carrying a scent from its source, the Soul that is lord of the body also bears along with him the senses and the mind from its previous body and assumes a new one.” ]

The Soul carries with him the propensities and mode of action of the mind and five senses of the body from which he departs and takes them into his new body. The next body is immediately assured and that is why Krishn asked Arjun earlier how he had happened to be a victim of the misconception that the departed Souls of ancestors would fall from heaven in the absence of obsequial rice-cakes and water-libation offerings. However, the immediate question is what the Soul does after going into a new body and what truly are the five senses along with the mind?

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च।

अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥९॥

[ “Governing the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste, smell and also the mind, he (the Soul) experiences objects through them.'' ]

But it is not seen to be so and everyone is not able to see it.

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम्।

विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥१०॥

[ “The ignorant are unaware of the Soul, endowed with the three properties and departing from the body or dwelling in it and enjoying objects; only they who have eyes of wisdom discern him.” ]

So naturally the next verse is on how to secure this vision.

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम्।

यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥११॥

[ “Yogi know the essence of the Soul dwelling in their heart, but the unknowing who have not purified themselves (of evils) fail to see him even after much endeavour.’’ ]

By restraining their minds from all directions and through earnest endeavour yogi perceive their Soul. But men with an unaccomplished Soul, that is, with unclean mind and heart, fail to see him even though they strive for it. This is because their mind and sense organs are impure. Only by making a strenuous effort to subdue their mind are sages enabled to apprehend their Self. So contemplation is a necessity. Krishn now throws light upon the glories of the Self of realized sages, which have also been dwelt upon earlier.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम्।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥१२॥

[ “Know that the radiance of the sun that lights up the world, and of the moon and fire, is my own effulgence.” ]

Next he points out the sage’s task:

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥१३॥

[ “Permeating the earth, I support all beings with my radical energy and like the ambrosial moon, I provide the sap that nourishes all plants.’’ ]

And-

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥१४॥

[ "I am the fire, possessed of pran and apan, within the body of all living beings that consumes the four kinds of food* *[*The four kinds of food are bhakshya, bhojya, lehya, and chosya. That which is chewed for eating is bhakshya; that which is swallowed without chewing is bhojya; that which is licked is lehya; and that which is sucked is chosya.]*. '' ]

In Chapter 4, Krishn referred to various kinds of fire-of knowledge (verses 19 and 37), of God (verse 25), of restraint (verse 26), of the senses (verse 26), of yog (verse 27), and of pran-apan (verses 29-30); and the resultant from all of them was said to be knowledge. Knowledge itself is fire. Assuming the form of such fire, it is Krishn who accepts and assimilates the food generated by the four modes of recitation, namely, baikhari, madhyama, pashyanti, and para that are endowed with pran and apan (it will be remembered that recitation is always by means of inhaled and exhaled breath*) *[*See the exposition of twenty-ninth verse in Chapter 4.]*.

According to Krishn God is the only food-manna-with which the Soul is so placated that it never feels any hunger again. We give the name of food to accepted nutrients of the body. But God alone is the real food. And this food is brought to ripeness only by going through the four steps of baikhari, madhyama, pashyanti, and para. Some wise men have also called them name (nam), form (rup), revelation (leela), and abode (dham). At first the name is pronounced audibly. Then, gradually, the form of the adored God begins to take shape within the heart. Subsequently, the worshipper begins to view God's dalliance in his breath-how he pervades every atom of the universe and how he operates everywhere. Perception of the works of God within the sphere of the heart is leela. Rather than enactment of folk plays based on the

legends of Ram and Krishn, it is perception of the operations of God within the realm of the heart that is the true leela. And the supreme abode is reached when the touch of God begins to be felt after the perception of his operations. Knowing him thus, the worshipper comes to dwell within him. Dwelling in this abode and dwelling in the Supreme Spirit-after feeling his touch in the perfect state of transcendental recitation (paravani) are simultaneous events.

Thus, equipped with pran and apan, or shwas and prashwas, and progressing gradually through baikhari and madhyama to the culminating stage of para, the food that God is, is ready and available and also assimilated, and, of course, by then the eater of the food is ready, too, to partake of the sublime nourishment.

**सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो**
**मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च।**
**वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो**
**वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥१५॥**

[ “Seated in the heart of all beings, I am their memory and knowledge and also the strength that overcomes all impediments; I am that which is worthy of being apprehended by the Ved; and I verily am the author of the Vedant as well as their knower.’’ ]

Krishn exists as the omniscient presence in the heart of all beings and it is because of him that the Supreme Spirit is remembered. Memory here signifies the recalling of the forgotten essence of God. There is clearly here a representation of the moment of realization. Knowledge that comes with memory and the ability to overcome difficulties are also gifts from Krishn. He is also a fit subject for knowing by all the Ved. He, too, is the author as well as end of the Ved. Knowledge comes when he is separate, but who will know whom when the worshipper has perceived him and become one with him? Krishn is

also knower of the Ved. He said at the beginning of the chapter that the world is a tree, of which the root is the God above and all of the branches below are nature. The one who can distinguish the root from the branches that are nature knows the essence of it, and he is versed in the Ved (sacred knowledge). Here he says that he is such a one-knower of the Ved. He thus puts himself on a par with other scholars of the Ved. Thus it is again stressed that Krishn was a sage who knew the truth-truly a Yogeshwar among yogi. The subject is concluded here and now he goes on to say that there are two kinds of beings (Purush).

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥१६॥

[ "There are two kinds of beings in the world, the mortal and the immortal: whereas the bodies of all beings are destructible, their Souls are said to be imperishable." ]

The person male or female, who has restrained his senses along with the mind, that is, whose body of senses is steady, is said to be imperishable. The ''perishable'' person exists today, but may not exist even tomorrow. But this too is Soul in a particular condition. There is, however, another Self beyond these two.

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥१७॥

[ "But higher than both of them is the one who pervades the three worlds to support and sustain all, and who is named the eternal God and Supreme Spirit (Ishwar).'' ]

The unmanifest God, the imperishable, and the Supreme Being are some other names by which he is known. But truly he is different and inexpressible. He represents the ultimate state beyond the mutable and the immutable (the perishable and the imperishable). He is directed by

the Supreme Spirit, but he is different and beyond words. Krishn introduces himself as a Soul in such a state.

**यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः।**

**अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥१८॥**

[ “Since I am supreme by virtue of being beyond both the perishable (body) and the imperishable (Soul), I am known as the Supreme Being (Purushottam) in the world as well as in the Ved.’’ ]

He is reputed as the Supreme Being in both the world and the Ved because he has transcended the destructible, mutable kshetr and even gone higher than the immutable, imperishable, steady Soul.

**यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम्।**

**स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥१९॥**

[ “The all-knowing man, who is thus aware of my essence, O Bharat, as the Supreme Being, always worships me with perfect devotion.’’ ]

Such a worshipper is not separate from Krishn.

**इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ।**

**एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥२०॥**

[ “I have thus instructed you, O the sinless, in this most subtle of all knowledge because, O Bharat, by knowing its essence a man gains wisdom and accomplishes all his tasks.” ]

Krishn thus enlightens Arjun on the most secret knowledge, by being well acquainted with the essence of which a man becomes all-knowing and gains his object. So this instruction by Krishn is a complete sacred precept in itself.

This mysterious knowledge of Krishn was most secret. He told this to only devotees. Rather than for all, it was meant only for the worthy

who are spiritually ready to receive and profit by it. But when the same secret teaching is put down in black and white, and appears in the form of a book, it may seem that Krishn has imparted it to all. But in truth it is only for those who are fit to receive it. Even the manifest form of Krishn was not meant for all. But he kept nothing back from the worthy Arjun. Arjun could not have been saved if his charioteer had kept secrets from him.

This uniqueness is to be found in all accomplished sages of Ramkrishn Paramhansdev was once ecstatic. His disciples asked him for the reason. Alluding to an eminent contemporary great soul, a realized sage (who had controlled and subdued all his senses by abstract meditation), Ramkrishn said that on that day he too had become a Paramhans like him. After a while he told the disciples who followed him aspiring-with mind, action and speech-for freedom from passion and worldly attachment, "Don't ever be in doubt now. I am the Ram who was born in Treta. I, too, am the Krishn of Dwapar. I am their sacred Soul. I am of their form. If you have to attain, behold me."

In precisely the same way my revered teacher used to say, "Mark you that I am but a messenger of God. Real sages are messengers of the all pervading, preeminent, changeless Supreme Spirit; and it is through them that his message is received." Jesus Christ exhorted men to come to him, all who labour and are heavily laden, and he would give them rest by revealing to them God his Father (Matthew, 11:28). So everyone can be a son of God* *[*The Koran, Surah II, 116 : "And they say : Allah has taken unto himself a Son. Be he glorified ! Nay, but whatsoever is in the heaven and the earth is his."]*. Albeit it is a different matter that going to sages is made possible only through sincere striving for the accomplishment of worship and meditation. In Surah II of the Koran, Allah reveals: "Lo! We have sent you (O Mohammad) with the truth, a bringer of glad tidings and a messenger.'' The revered Maharaj Ji used

to say the same about himself to all. He neither supported nor contradicted any view or doctrine; but he did tell those who earnestly craved for liberation from passions and worldly attachment: “Just look at my form. If you aspire for the ultimate Spirit, contemplate me and have no doubt.” There were many who were skeptical, but, through demonstrating by personal experience and conduct, and even by berating them, he made them give up their irrelevant assumptions among which are included the many rituals and ceremonies dwelt upon by Krishn in verses 40-43 of Chapter 2, and thus induced them to have faith in him. He exists timelessly as an accomplished sage. Likewise, although Krishn’s glory was a mystery, he revealed it to his earnest devotee, worthy and affectionate Arjun. This is possible with every worshipper and sages have thus brought millions on to the spiritual path.

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Krishn said at the beginning of the chapter that the world is a tree like the Peepal. But the Peepal is just an analogy. Its root is the God above and all nature is its branches that spread below. The one who gains awareness of the tree along with its root is well-versed in the Ved. The branches of this world-tree as well as its roots are everywhere, high and low, because it has sprung from the God whose seed-the Soul-resides within the heart of every being.

There is the myth that, seated on the lotus once, Brahma speculated over his origin. He entered the stem of the lotus from which he was born and went deeper and deeper into it. He penetrated even deeper, but he could not see the source of his birth. So in despair he resumed his seat on the lotus. Then through restraint of mind and meditation he at last discovered his fountainhead in the Supreme Spirit and extolled him, whereupon God himself revealed to him that although he exists everywhere, he can be found only within the heart. The one who contemplates him within the sphere of his heart realizes him.

Brahma is a symbol. He represents the emergence of the ideal state from the mature practice of yog. The mind that is inclined towards God and possessed of knowledge of the Supreme Spirit is Brahma. Although growing in water, the lotus is unstained and pure. When the mind wanders about in quest it does not gain its object, but seated on an immaculate seat with total self-restraint, the same mind realizes God within the heart when it reaches the stage of dissolution of that restraint itself.

Here, too, the world is a tree, whose roots and boughs are everywhere. It stands for the worldly fetters that bind only human beings in accordance with their actions. The other forms only suffer the consequences of these actions. So Krishn implores Arjun to sever this Peepal -like world with the axe of firm renunciation and seek for the supreme goal, after achieving which sages are not reborn.

As to how to know that the tree has been cut down, the Yogeshwar says that the man who is free from pride and ignorance, who has overcome the evil of attachment, whose desires have come to an end, and who is liberated from conflicts, attains to the final beatitude. Illuminated by neither the sun nor the moon, nor by fire, the God who is the ultimate state is self-radiant. What is essential for this spiritual achievement is firm conviction that the one after approaching whom there is no reversion is the supreme abode, and that all are equally entitled to it because the embodied Soul is but an immaculate part of Krishn himself.

When the Soul gives up a body, he carries the inclinations of its mind and five senses into the new body he assumes. If the sanskar is enlightened and morally good, the Soul attains to the level of enlightenment and moral virtue. If he bears rajas-dominated sanskar, he gets through to the medium level. And if the sanskar is characterized by tamas, the Soul climbs down to birth in lower forms of life and indulges in

sensual pleasures through their mind that controls the senses. This is usually not seen, for the vision that is needed to perceive it is the vision of knowledge. Just memorizing something is not knowledge. Yogi are enabled to see it only by concentrating the mind on the Self. Thus knowledge is achieved from practice and accomplishment, although it is true that study of sacred works inclines one to it. Men who are skeptical and devoid of accomplishment do not gain the desired object even though they endeavour hard for it.

Thus there is here a portrayal of the stage of realization. So it is but natural that the attributes of this stage are dwelt upon. Throwing light upon them, Krishn says that he is the light of the sun and the moon, and he is also the brightness of fire. It is his fire that accepts and assimilates the food that reaches the state of readiness by four ways. In the words of Krishn, God is the only food (such is the verdict of the Upanishad in which the idea occurs) after tasting which the Soul is fully contented. The food generated from the stage of baikhari to para is readied and consumed, and even the worshipper, the recipient of this food, ceases to exist. However, this achievement cannot be possible until there is a sage-teacher -the charioteer who restrains, guides, and prompts.

Stressing the same point, Krishn states that it is he who, residing in the heart of all beings, generates memory. He causes them to recall the God who was forgotten. He is also the knowledge that comes with this memory. It is also by him that the hurdles in the way are surmounted. He alone is fit to be known and he, too, is the one who represents the end of this knowledge after it is known. And since after this point the knower and the known are one, knowledge is irrelevant, for now who is there to know and who to be known. Krishn is knower of the Ved- of the divine truth. He has said that he who knows the world-tree along with its root is versed in the knowledge of Ved, but this knowledge comes only to him who cuts down the tree. Now he says that he is

knower of the Ved. He counts himself as one of those who are initiated into the wisdom of the Ved. So Krishn too is here a sage-knower of the Ved, the knowledge of which the all of mankind is entitled to.

At the end it is said that the world has three kinds of beings. All the bodies of beings are transitory, but the same being is imperishable in the state when the mind is steady, although it is subject to contradictions. And even higher than this is the transcendental God who is said to be unmanifest and eternal, and who is indeed unique. This is the being beyond transience and permanence; this is the ultimate being. As one with this being, Krishn is thus also the same-beyond the destructible and the indestructible-because of which he is known as the Supreme Being. Enlightened seekers who know the Supreme Spirit thus worship Krishn wholeheartedly. There is no anomaly in their knowledge.

It is this most (secret) knowledge that Krishn imparts to Arjun. Sages of attainment do not reveal it to all, but they also do not hide it from the deserving. If it is hidden from them, how will they achieve their object?

Thus concludes the Fifteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : **"Purushottam Yog''** or **''The Yog of the Supreme Being''.**

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the fifteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 16

# The Yog of Telling
# The Devine From the Demoniacal

Yogeshwar Krishn has a unique style of posing a problem. He first indicates the peculiarities of the issue in order to compel attention to it, and then elaborates and explains it. His treatment of action may be cited as an instance of this. In Chapter 2 he exhorted Arjun to act. He then suggested to him in Chapter 3 that he ought to undertake the ordained action. Elucidating its nature he pointed out that the performance of yagya is action. Subsequently, before describing the nature of yagya he dwelt upon its origin as well as upon what it has to offer us. In Chapter 4, he resorted to more than a dozen ways to unravel the nature of yagya, the doing of which is action. It is now that the meaning of action is made clear: that in the true sense it denotes yogic contemplation and worship which are accomplished by the operation of the mind and senses.

In similar fashion Krishn named the treasure of divinity and the accumulated hoard of demoniacal impulses in Chapter 9. After stressing their main features he told Arjun that men with demoniacal nature regard him but as a contemptible mortal. He has after all a human body and it is in this form that he has attained to his supreme state. But they who are evil and ignorant refuse to adore him. Blessed with the treasure of divinity, on the other hand, his devotees meditate upon him with single-mindedness. However, the nature of divine and demoniacal impulses

has not yet been made clear. It is only in the present chapter that this task is undertaken and the first to be presented are attributes of the treasure of divinity.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्‌धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः।**

**दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम्‌ ॥१॥**

[ "The Lord said, 'Fearlessness, inner purity, steadfastness of yog for knowledge, charity, continence, yagya, study of scriptures, penance, and uprightness,...'" ]

Total absence of fear, inner sanctity, constant endeavour and meditation to acquire the truth, complete self-surrender, subduing of the mind and senses, conduct of yagya (as laid down by Krishn in Chapter 4), offering sacrifice to the fire of self-restraint as well as to the fire of the senses, offering pran and apan as oblation to each other, and last of all the process of worship that entails sacrificing oneself to the fire of knowledge which is achieved by the inner workings of the mind and senses rather than by the yagya that is performed with oilseeds, barley-grains and an altar (Krishn accepts no such ceremonial act or sacrificial rite as yagya ), meditation upon the Self which is the discipline that prompts one towards the identical Supreme Spirit, penance that moulds the mind along with the senses in accordance with the cherished goal, and integrity of the mind and heart as well as of the body and its senses, are some of the traits that characterize pious men.

**अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम्‌।**

**दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम्‌ ॥२॥**

[ “Nonviolence, truthfulness, abstinence of anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of malice, compassion for all beings, disinterestedness, tenderness, modesty, abstinence from futile effort,...” ]

True nonviolence is salvaging of the Soul, for degrading the Soul is violence. As Krishn has avowed, he will be the destroyer of all mankind and generator of varnsankar if he does not carry out his task conscientiously. Since the character (varn) of the Self is that of God, his straying about amidst nature is varnasankar: this is injury to the Soul and his deliverance is nonviolence in the true sense. Truthfulness is not speaking what is apparently real or pleasing. Is it truth when we say that these clothes belong to us? There can be, in fact, no more blatant a lie than this. If we are not masters of our own persons that are mutable, or changeable, how can the clothing that but covers them belong to us? The Yogeshwar himself has spoken of the nature of truth to Arjun in asserting that there is no death of what is true in all the three divisions of time-past, present, and future. The Self alone is true; he is the supreme truth. This is the truth we have to fix our eyes on. Some other attributes of a righteous man are abstinence from anger, surrender of whatever one has, renunciation of desire for the rewards of good as well as of evil action, absence of fickleness, avoidance of undesirable acts that are contrary to the aspired-for goal, feeling of mercy for all beings, non-attachment to objects even when the senses are associated with them, feeling of tenderness, shame at straying from the object, and keeping away from futile effort.

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता।

भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥

[ “Magnificence, forgiveness, patience, purity of thought and conduct, and absence of animosity and vanity-are (all) attributes of the man endowed with divine riches.’’ ]

Glory is a property of God alone and the one, who acts by virtue of this divine magnificence partakes of it. No sooner did Angulimal look at Mahatma Buddh than his thoughts were transmuted. This was because of the inherent greatness of Buddh-the greatness which generates blessedness. Krishn finally concludes his enumeration by telling Arjun that some other marks of the treasure of divinity are forgiveness, steady temper, innocence, hostility against none, and total rejection of the feeling of conceit. In all twenty-six attributes are thus catalogued and, whereas all of them subsist only in a seeker whose meditation has ripened to maturity, they partially exist in all of us. They lie in dormancy even in men who are dominated by evil impulses and it is because of this that even the most fallen sinner is entitled to redemption.

**दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च।**

**अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीम् ॥४॥**

[ "Ostentation, arrogance and conceit as well as wrath, harsh speech, and ignorance are all, O Parth, the qualities of a man with devilish character." ]

Now the respective operations of the two kinds of character are elaborated.

**दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता।**

**मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥५॥**

[ "Since it is established, O Pandav, that while the treasure of divinity liberates and the demoniacal state acts as a shackle, you have no need to grieve for you are blessed with divine riches." ]

Possessed as he is of a sacred disposition, Arjun will surely attain to salvation and thus to the state of Krishn himself. But in whom do the wealth of divinity and demoniacal impulses abide?

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च।

दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥६॥

[ “There are in the world, O Parth, two kinds of beings, the pious, on whom I have already dwelt at length, and the devilish of whom you will now hear from me.” ]

There are in the world two kinds of men, godlike and demon-like. When sacred impulses are active within the heart, man is godlike; but he turns devilish if he is rife with demoniacal inclinations. Whether born in Arabia or Australia or anywhere else, people all over the world are divided into only these two classes. After having spoken at length so far of godly disposition Krishn now proceeds to enlighten Arjun on the traits of demoniacal temper.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः।

न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥७॥

[ “Wanting in inclination to both engage in proper action and avoid improper acts, the demoniacal have neither purity nor the right conduct, nor even truthfulness.” ]

Men with devilish predilections are ignorant both of that which is worthy of being done and of that which ought to be escaped because it is unrighteous. So they are bereft of innocence, just conduct, and of the eternal verities. How their minds function is represented in the following verse:

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम्।

अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥८॥

[ “Since the world, they say, is unreal, without shelter and God, and created by itself through mutual (male-female) intercourse, what else is it for except physical indulgence?” ]

With such an assumption, the only purpose of worldly life is enjoyment of sensual pleasures. What else is there besides them?

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः।

प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥९॥

[ "Depraved and dim-witted because they hold such a view, these malicious and cruel people are born only to ravage the world.'' ]

With their nature corrupted by their dependence on a mistaken outlook, the only purpose of their existence is to destroy others.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः।

मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ॥१०॥

[ "Possessed of arrogance, conceit and wantonness, and immersed in insatiable lust, they subscribe to false doctrines out of ignorance and act wickedly." ]

Maddened by ego and cherishing desires that cannot be satisfied, these ignorant persons entertain mistaken beliefs and indulge in religious practices that are in fact unholy and corrupt Even the presumably sacred ceremonies and sacrificial rites performed by them are nothing but perversions.

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः।

कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥११॥

[ "Beset by countless anxieties that stretch right up to death and absorbed in the enjoyment of sensual objects, they are firmly convinced that satisfaction of carnal desires is the highest goal.'' ]

Gratification of sensual desires is the only happiness for them and they are so enamoured of this thought that they strive only to have as much of pleasure as they can, for there is to them nothing beyond this.

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः।

ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥१२॥

[ “Chained by hundreds of bonds of illusory hopes, and at the mercy of desire and anger, they wrongfully endeavour to store wealth for the satisfaction of their lust.” ]

Even a single rope is sufficient to hang a person, while these people are enmeshed in innumerable aspirations.

Addicted to lust and anger, they are engaged day and night in wrongfully amassing of riches for the gratification of sensual desires. It is further said in this context:

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम्।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥१३॥

[ “Their perpetual thought is: I have gained this today and I shall have that wish; I have these riches and I shall have more in the future.” ]

And-

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥१४॥

[ “I have slain that enemy and I shall also slay other enemies; I am God and the holder of sovereignty.” ]

Besides being under the illusion that they are perfect, strong, and happy, they are also vain regarding their great fortune and noble birth, and they mistakenly believe that they are unequalled.

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया।

यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥१५॥

[ “Thus deluded by ignorance they think: I am wealthy and noble-born. Who can equal me? I shall perform yagya, give alms, and lead a life of bliss.” ]

They are victims of even more delusions. However, there is a problem here. All that these men do are said to be an outcome of ignorance. Is it, we may ask, also ignorance to practise yagya and charity? Before further dwelling upon the problem in the seventeenth verse, Krishn takes up the question of the ultimate end of these ignorant, deluded men.

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः।

प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥१६॥

[ “Misled in many a way, entangled in the webs of attachment, and inordinately fond of sensual pleasure, they fall into the most defiled hell.”]

Krishn will later throw light upon the nature of this hell, but in the meantime he reverts to the problem of the apparently sacred acts of the ignorant:

आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः।

यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥१७॥

[ “These conceited persons, intoxicated by vanity and wealth, offer ostentatious sacrifices which are yagya only in name, in violation of scriptural injunction.’’ ]

Rendered arrogant and senseless by wealth and worldly honour, these persons perform ceremonies and sacrificial rites which are only nominally yagya, and sacrilegious to boot. They do not observe the mode of worship laid down by Yogeshwar Krishn in verses 24-33 and 10-17 of the fourth and sixth chapters respectively.

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः।

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥१८॥

[ "Subservient to vanity, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger, these wicked and degraded persons have a feeling of enmity to me who dwells in them and in all others.'' ]

According to scripture, memory of God is yagya. They who forsake this way and perform only nominal yagya, or do something or the other instead of yagya, abhor God and are hostile to him. But there are persons who continue to abhor and are yet saved. Are these enemies of God also going to be saved? Krishn's answer to the question is that it is not so.

तानहं द्विषतः क्रुरान्संसारेषु नराधमान्।

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥१९॥

[ "I forever condemn these abhorring, degraded, and cruel persons, the most abject, among mankind, to demoniacal births.'' ]

They who worship in transgression of scriptural ordinance are the lowly-born and the most degraded of people, and it is they who are judged to be perpetrators of cruel deeds. Krishn has declared earlier that he hurls such degraded persons down into hell. Now he reiterates the same when he says that he dooms them to perpetual devilish births. This is hell. If the torments of a common prison are terrible, how much more so must be the endless fall into inferior forms of life? So it is imperative that one must always strive to acquire the treasure of divinity.

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥२०॥

[ "Instead of realizing me, O son of Kunti, these ignorant fools, conceived in devilish wombs birth after birth, are doomed to fall yet lower to the most degraded state.'' ]

This degradation is given the name of hell. So let us now view the origin of this hell.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥२१॥

[ “Since lust, anger, and greed are the three gateways to hell because they are destructive of the Self, they ought to be forsaken.” ]

Lust, anger, and greed are the three bases on which demoniacal impulses rest. So giving them up is a profitable enterprise.

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२२॥

[ “The person, O son of Kunti, who escapes these three doors to hell, practises what is propitious for them and thus attains to the supreme State.” ]

Only by keeping away from these three ways to hell is a person equipped for conduct that may reward them with sublime good and the final beatitude of attaining to Krishn. Only by abandoning the three perversions can a person perform the ordained task, the outcome of which is the ultimate glory of redemption.

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥२३॥

[ “The one who transgresses scriptural injunction and acts indiscriminately according to his will achieves neither perfection nor the Supreme Goal, nor even happiness.” ]

The scripture in question is none other than the Geeta itself, which Krishn has described as “the most mysterious of all knowledge” in the twentieth verse of Chapter 15. The Geeta is the perfect scripture; and

the one who ignores it and acts wilfully is deprived of accomplishment, salvation, and bliss.

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥२४॥

[ "So scripture is the authority on what ought and ought not to be done, and having learnt that you have the ability to act according to the provisions laid down by the scripture.'' ]

In the eighth verse of Chapter 3, too, Krishn told Arjun to do the ordained task. Besides stressing the ordained action, he has also pointed out that yagya is that action. Yagya is an image of that special form of worship which completely subdues the mind and leads one to the eternal, immutable God. He now adds that desire, wrath, and avarice are the three main approaches to hell. Only after renouncing these three evils does action commence-the appointed action which Krishn has repeatedly portrayed as the conduct which brings one the highest glory and supreme good. The more a person is engaged in external worldly business, the more alluring is the form in which desire, anger, and greed manifest themselves to him. The ordained action is on the other hand something to which access is secured only after the giving up of lust, wrath, and greed, and it is only then that such action is transformed into habitual conduct. For the person who rejects it and acts wilfully, there is neither happiness nor accomplishment, nor the ultimate absolution. And scripture is the only authority that prescribes the righteous as well as the unrighteous. So it is incumbent upon Arjun to conduct himself according to scripture and that scripture is the Geeta.

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At the beginning of the chapter Yogeshwar Krishn has given an elaborate account of the pious impulses that constitute the treasure of divinity. Steady meditation, total self-surrender, inner sanctity, restraint of

the senses, subduing the mind, study that reminds one of the Self, striving towards yagya, mortification of the senses along with the mind, absence of anger, and calm intellect are among its twenty-six attributes that have been pointed out. All of these virtues dwell only in those worshippers who are engaged in the practice of yog and have come close to the desired goal, but they exist partially in all-in you as well as me.

Subsequently Krishn has named about half a dozen deviations such as ignorance, arrogance, vanity, and cruelty that make up the demoniacal hoard. Finally, then, he pronounces the verdict, addressing Arjun, that whereas the riches of piety bring about perfect liberation and realization of the supreme state, the store of devilish impulses shackles and degrades the Self. But Arjun is at the same time assured that he need not despair, for he is blessed with the treasure of divinity.

Which, however, are the abodes of the righteous and of the unrighteous impulses? Discoursing on this, Krishn has said that people's disposition is of two kinds, the pious and the impious. A person is godly if there is an abundance of the divine impulses in him, but is devilish if he teems with vices. Wherever they are born and whatever names they are known by, people cannot but belong to one of these two classes.

Krishn then gives a detailed account of the attributes of men who are cursed with evil disposition. Men with unrighteous predilections have no inkling of how to undertake action that is worth doing, nor of how to abstain from that which is unworthy. Since they have not undertaken action, there is in them neither truth nor purity, nor the right conduct. According to them the world has neither any shelter nor God, and is just mechanically generated by carnal intercourse. So, indulgence is their ultimate goal, for there is nothing beyond it for them. Such a delusion was common in Krishn's age, too. In fact, it has always existed. It is not that only Charvak* *[*A sophist philosopher who propounded the grossest form of*

*atheism and materialism.]* has propagated such a view; it will be there so long as the human psyche is subject to the rise and ebb of divine and devilish instincts. According to Krishn, dim-witted, cruel men are born only to harm others and to destroy whatever is propitious. They insist that since they have slain one foe, they will now slay another. So Krishn tells Arjun that rather than slaying their foes these men who are slaves to lust and anger are really hostile to him-the God that exists within them as well as all others. Did Arjun kill Jayadrath* *[*A brother-in-law of Duryodhan, after having been subjected to many humiliations by the Pandav for offering an insult to Draupadi, Jayadrath played a leading part in planning the slaughter of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun, and at last met his death at the hands of Arjun.]* and others under a vow ? If he did, he is but a demoniacal character. He is then an enemy of God. But Krishn has explicitly declared that Arjun is blessed with divine riches. That is why he has been counselled not to despair. There is thus another evidence here that God resides in the hearts of all. It ought to be kept in mind that there is a power above that is constantly watching us. So it is essential that our conduct and performance of action should be in keeping with what is ordained by scripture, or else there is imminent punishment.

Yogeshwar Krishn has said that he for ever hurls down demoniacal, cruel men, again and again, into hell. But what is the form of this hell? According to Krishn, hell is repeatedly falling into low, sordid births; they are thus synonymous expressions. This degradation of the Self is hell; and lust, anger and greed are the three chief gateways to it. These are the three bases of demoniacal tendencies. Only a renunciation of these three marks the commencement of the action which has time and again been discoursed upon by Krishn. Lust, anger, and greed appear even more tempting to those who are the more intensely absorbed in worldly affairs or even in decorous fulfillment of social obligations. Truly, therefore, only by eschewing these three does

one gain admittance to the ordained action. And the scripture- the Geeta - is, therefore, the only authority to turn to, when one is faced by the dilemma of what to do and what not to do - of that which is worthy of doing and that which is unworthy. So the injunction is, to undertake only the unique action, ordained by this holy book - the true action.

Thus Yogeshwar Krishn has, in this chapter, elaborately described divine as well as devilish impulses and indicated that the human heart itself is the habitat of both.

Thus concludes the Sixteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : "**Daivasur Sampad-Vibhag Yog**" or "**The Yog of Telling the Divine from the Demoniacal**."

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Sixteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 17

# The Yog of Threefold Faith

Yogeshwar Krishn explicitly said at the end of Chapter 16 that the action which he has repeatedly spoken of commences only after the renunciation of desire, anger, and greed. It is the action without accomplishing which there is neither happiness nor perfection, nor the final beatitude. Scripture is, therefore, the authority to fall back upon whenever we are faced by the dilemma of that which is worthy of being done and that which is unworthy-of that which we should do and that which we should not. And that scripture is the Geeta, the epitome of the most esoteric knowledge. There are other scriptures, too, but it is of the utmost importance that we always keep our eyes fixed on the Geeta. If we seek elsewhere we may stray, for the systematic, straight approach of the Geeta is not to be found anywhere else.

Thereafter Arjun asks the Lord to enlighten him on the state of persons who worship in contravention of the scriptural ordinance although with staunch faith. Are they sattwiki, rajasi or tamasi? Are they righteous, impassioned, or diabolical? Arjun wishes to be enlightened on this because he has learnt earlier that whatever be the property, sattwa, rajas or tamas, it is determined by the nature of one’s birth. It is for this reason that at the very outset of the chapter he raises the question.

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः।**

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥१॥

[ “Arjun said, What, O Krishn, is the property-sattwa, rajas, or tamas of persons who albeit worship with faith but in disregard of the scriptural ordinance?’ ” ]

To resolve Arjun’s doubt Krishn then classifies faith too as being of three kinds.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा।

सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥२॥

[ “The Lord said,‘Listen to me on how the faith arising from people’s innate nature, too, is of three kinds, virtuous, impassioned, and blind.’” ]

In Chapter 2, the Yogeshwar told Arjun that the prescribed action in yog, in both the Way of Selfless Action and the Way of Discrimination, is the same. The mind which is earnestly and firmly given to selfless action is aimed in a single direction. The minds of ignorant persons are, on the contrary, endlessly divided, because of which they invent countless different ways. Their minds are riddled with innumerable dissensions and they not only devise various rites and ceremonies, but also flaunt them in flowery and alluring words. Unfortunately they who pay heed to these alluring words are also deluded, as a result of which they fail to do that which is worthwhile and just. The same is reiterated here in a different way when Krishn points out that the faith of persons who worship in transgression of the scriptural injunction is of three kinds. The current of Faith flowing in the human heart, is either good or fervent or insensible.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥३॥

[ “Since the faith of all people, O Bharat, is according to their inherent propensity and man is reverent, he is what his faith is.’’ ]

The faith of all persons is according to their natural inclination. Man is by nature a creature of faith. It is thus that a person’s character bears a close resemblance to the character of their faith. We are often asked who we are. Some of us say that we are Soul. But Yogeshwar Krishn contradicts this: like the nature of their inherent disposition is their faith, and so thus is the person.

The Geeta provides an insight into what true yog is. Maharshi Patanjali was also a yogi and we have his yog system of philosophy. According to him yog is perfect restraint of the mind. And the use of this arduous discipline is that in this state the onlooker, the individual Soul enshrined in the human body, comes to rest firmly in his own eternal, true counterpart. Is he tainted before this union ? In Patanjali’s view the Soul is earlier the same as the predilection of the man who embodies it. And Krishn now affirms that man is naturally endowed with the quality of faith, indeed totally immersed in it. There is some dedication in him and he is moulded by the character of his faith. A man is what his natural inclination is. At this point, Krishn proceeds to catalogue the three kinds of faith.

**यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः।**

**प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥४॥**

[ “While the virtuous worship gods and the impassioned and morally blind worship yaksh and demons, they who are blinded by ignorance worship ghosts and nature-spirits.’’ ]

We all labour tirelessly to worship what our hearts are inclined to and what we revere.

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः।

दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥५॥

कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः।

मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥६॥

[ "Mark you that they who undergo terrible self-mortification without scriptural sanction and are afflicted with hypocrisy and arrogance besides lust, attachment, and vanity of power, and who wear out not only the elements that form their bodies but also me who dwells in their Souls, are ignorant men with evil disposition.'' ]

The Soul is rendered feeble by maladies when it slips into the fissures of nature, whereas yagya provides him strength. Arjun is, therefore, counselled to regard the ignorant, insensible people who do injury to the Soul as unquestionably demoniacal. Thus is resolved the issue raised by Arjun.

Righteous persons who have forsaken the way shown by scripture worship gods; they who are driven by passions worship yaksh and demons; and the ignorant pray and bow to ghosts and spirits. They not only worship, but indulge in the most agonizing exercises of penance. According to Krishn, however, these acts of self-mortification only sap the elements that make up their bodies and the God within their Soul. Thus, instead of adoring the one true God and partaking of his divinity, they only further distance themselves from him. These persons ought to be regarded as evil. This implies that even worshippers of gods are evil. There could be no stronger way of putting across the idea. So let us resolve to only adore and pray to and worship that Supreme - Being of whom all these-the many gods, yaksh, demons, ghosts and

spirits-are no more than tiny fractions. This has been repeatedly emphasized by Krishn.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः।

यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥७॥

[ "Listen to me (as I tell you) the distinction between the three kinds of yagya, penance, and alms, that are like the three kinds of food relished according to individual taste." ]

People love three kinds of food according to their respective taste just as there are three kinds of faith; and there are likewise three kinds of yagya, penance, and charity. The first to be categorized is food.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥८॥

[ "Food that is naturally pleasing and conducive to life, intellect, strength, sound health, happiness, and satisfaction besides being savoury, tender, and durable is loved by the virtuous.'' ]

Apparently, according to Krishn, food that is naturally agreeable and good for strength, sound health, and intellect, and thus for longevity, is good. And such food is dear to the righteous.

It is thus clear that no food as such has the property of ennobling or of stimulating, or of depressing. So neither is milk perfect nor onions inflaming, nor garlic a generator of baser instincts.

As for food that is conducive to good physique, healthy mind, and sound health, the choice of people all over the world varies widely according to environment and geographical condition and, of course, according to individual taste. Whereas rice is the staple food of some, others in other regions prefer bread made from wheat-flour. There are countries where people subsist mainly on banana and potato. Mutton and fish, and even frogs, snakes and dogs, and horse-flesh are all

accepted and enjoyed as food by inhabitants of different parts of the earth. There are people to whom camel-flesh is a delicacy. An overwhelming majority of Europeans and Americans are eaters of beef and pork. But that has not in any way prevented them from being ranked first in matters of learning, intellectual advancement, and economic progress.

According to the Geeta, food that is tasteful, tender, and nutritious is sattwik. That food is good which is congenial and favourable to long life, strengthening of both body and mind, and to sound health. But it is also laid down that food that is naturally relished is good. So there is no use saying that this food is pious while that is impious. The only tenable view is that, that food is good which is in keeping with the local situation, surroundings, place, and time, and which provides the required nourishment. The use of an object, rather than the object itself, is what makes it good, morally objectionable, or evil.

So it is that food and drinks such as meat and alcoholic beverages are uncongenial to a person who has renounced the home and family, and taken up the life of a sanyasi renunciate engaged in meditation upon God. Experience demonstrates that such victuals result in a state of mind that is inimical to spiritual discipline. There is always a possibility that such food and drinks will lead the seeker astray from the way of attainment. So they who have chosen a life of seclusion because of their disenchantment with worldly passions had better keep in mind the advice about food that Krishn has offered in Chapter 6. The proper thing to do is to eat and drink only that which is favourable to worship and adoration of God.

**कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः।**

**आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥९॥**

[ “Bitter, sour, salty, too hot, pungent, rough, and acidic food that gives rise to sorrow, worries, and illness, is preferred by the passionate.” ]

And –

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत्।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥१०॥

[ “Food that is half-cooked, unsavoury, odorous, stale, leftover, and defiled is liked by men with a dull sensibility.’’ ]

The discussion of food is now closed and that of the next subject, namely, yagya, taken up.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥११॥

[ “Yagya that has scriptural sanction and the performance of which is an obligation, is fitting and auspicious when it is practised by persons with intent minds who aspire to no reward.” ]

The Geeta approves of such yagya. It was in Chapter 3 that Krishn First named yagya. “Since the conduct of yagya is the only action,” he said, “and all other business in which people are engaged are only forms of worldly bondage, O son of Kunti, be unattached and do your duty to the Supreme Spirit well.” In Chapter 4, then, he went on to explain the character of the unique action called yagya: that it is an act of sacrifice in which the practicer of yog offers the incoming and outgoing breath (pran and apan) to each other and in which the two vital winds are regulated by offering them as oblation to the fire of self-restraint to achieve serenity of breath. There were thus enumerated fourteen steps of yagya, which are all but varying stages of the same action that bridges the gulf between individual Soul and the Supreme Spirit. In brief, yagya has been imaged as that unique process of contemplation which leads

the worshipper to the eternal, immutable God and ultimately effects his dissolution in that Supreme Being.

Krishn again points to the same holy injunction when he lays it down that the yagya that is decreed by scripture and the performance of which is a duty and which restrains the mind, is the yagya of excellence when it is undertaken by persons who do not desire any fruit of their endeavours.

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत्।

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥१२॥

[ "And, O the unequalled among Bharat, be it known to you that the yagya which is embarked upon for mere ostentation, or even with a view to some reward, is contaminated by passion and moral blindness.'' ]

The one who sets about thus is versed in the precept of yagya, but he is, in fact, unrighteous and obsessed because he performs yagya either to flaunt his virtue and win admiration, or with the design of securing some profit.

Krishn then points out the features of the most inferior kind of yagya.

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम्।

श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥१३॥

[ "Devoid of scriptural sanction and powerless to invoke the Supreme Spirit as well as to restrain the mind, the yagya that is engaged in without a sense of total sacrifice and faith is said to be demoniacal.'' ]

Unsupported by scriptural authority and incapable of generating even food-the lowest form in which God is manifested-and of restraining the mind to the Self, and possessed of neither the urge to make sacred offerings-the will for total self-surrender-nor true devotion, this form of yagya is rightly said to be of the most inferior kind. Therefore, the person

who undertakes it does not have even the faintest glimmering of true yagya.

Krishn next remarks upon the question of penance.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम्।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥१४॥

[ "Adoration of God, the twice-born, the teacher-preceptor, and of the learned, along with having the qualities of innocence, uprightness, chastity, and disinclination to violence-are said to be penance of the body.'' ]

The body ever strays towards its desires. So chastening it to make it abide by the predisposition of the Soul is physical penance.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत्।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥१५॥

[ "And utterance that does not agitate but is soothing, propitious, and truthful, and which is but an exercise in the study of Ved, in remembrance of the Supreme Being, and in Self-contemplation, is said to be the penance of speech." ]

Articulation is also resorted to in order to give expression to thoughts that have a leaning towards objects of sensual gratification. Restraining it from this and steering it deliberately in the direction of God is the penance of speech.

The last form we are apprised of is penance of the mind.

मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥१६॥

[ "Affable temperament, tranquillity, silent meditation, self-possession, inner purity, and the like are said to be penance of the mind." ]

Simultaneous practice of the three kinds of penance - of body, speech and mind-is the truly worthwhile penance.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः।

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥१७॥

[ "The threefold types of penance undergone with utmost faith by selfless persons who do not desire any fruit thereof is said to be truly righteous."]

The other kind of self-mortification is that which is indulged in by persons whose temperament is that of rajas, or passion.

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥१८॥

[ "And if undergone with the purpose of gaining homage, honour, and adoration, or for mere display, penance is unsteady and ephemeral, and is said to have the property of rajas." ]

And so we now come to the penance of the most depraved kind- the one which is deemed evil, which is of the nature, or property, of tamas.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥१९॥

[ ''The penance that is undertaken out of mere stupid stubbornness or to hurt others is said to be diabolical.'' ]

Thus, as we have seen, the purpose of penance that is good and virtuous is to mould the body, mind, and speech in harmony with the cherished end. The mode of impulsive penance is similar, but it is taken up with the vainglorious desire for worldly honour. Sometimes even exceptional souls who have renounced the world fall prey to this infirmity. The third kind of penance, that which is called demoniacal, is not only

done wrongfully but also with the malicious intention of causing harm to others.

Krishn next takes up the question of alms.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥२०॥

[ "And the alms that are given to the right person at the right place and time, and in the spirit that charity is a bounden duty done without any expectation, are said to be good.'' ]

However, charity that is grievous because it is done under coercion, or with expectation of some favour or reward, is of the impassioned kind.

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः।

दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥२१॥

[ "And alms which are offered grudgingly and fog a good turn in exchange, or with some recompense in view, is said to be impulsive and morally improper.'' ]

The basest kind of gifts are, however, those that are offered with disrespect and scorn to the undeserving at an inopportune place and time.

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥२२॥

[ "And the alms which are dispensed without deference or contemptuously to unworthy recipients at an inappropriate place and time are said to be diabolical." ]

The revered Maharaj Ji would always tell us, "Bear it in mind that the donor is wrecked if he gives alms to the undeserving." Similar to this is Krishn's observation that charity is worthwhile only if it is directed, at a

suitable place and time, at the meritorious with true generosity and without any desire for a reciprocal favour. Gifts that are offered reluctantly and with an eye on some profit in return are morally flawed, while alms that are given irreverently and with scorn to the undeserving are positively evil. Though generically they are all gifts, alms-giving by persons who renounce their desires, home, and all, and place their trust in God alone, is of a higher order, for charity of this kind implies a total surrender by a mind that has been purged of all cravings. Krishn approves of this form of charity as an indispensable necessity.

Krishn at last enlightens Arjun on the significance of OM, tat, and sat* *[*The syllable OM, symbol of the Supreme Spirit, has been explained before, too. This sacred syllable is also called pranav, the word or sound. The word represents the all-prevading, pre-eminent, unchangeable God from whom have arisen all Ved, all yagya, and the whole creation. Tat means it and is used deferentially for God. And sat means "truth'' that is unaffected by time, space, and the law of causation.]*.

**ॐतत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः।**

**ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥२३॥**

[ "Om, tat , and sat are three epithets used for the Supreme Being from whom at the outset there came forth the Brahmin, Ved, and yagya.'' ]

Krishn tells Arjun on how the three names Om, tat, and sat, symbolizing God, direct us to the Supreme Being and call him to mind. It is he who, at the beginning, created the Brahmin, the Ved, and yagya. That is to say that Brahmin, the Ved, and yagya are all born from OM, the symbol Of Brahm. Thus it could also be said that they have all ensued from yog. They are generated only by ceaseless contemplation of OM, and other than this there is no way.

**तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः।**

**प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥२४॥**

[ “It is hence that the deeds of yagya, charity, and penance, as ordained by scripture, are always initiated by the devotees of Ved with a resonant utterance of the syllable OM.’’ ]

It is owing to this that performance of the ordained worship, benevolence and penance by persons who concern themselves with God ever commences with an articulation of the sacred OM, for this utterance reminds one of that Supreme Being.

Krishn then elaborates the meaning and use of tat.

तदित्यनभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥२५॥

[ “Stripped of desire for any reward and holding that God is all pervading, persons who aspire to the ultimate bliss embark on the tasks of yagya, penance, and charity as ordained by scripture.’’ ]

Tat denotes surrender to God. Stated differently, one has to recite OM and take up the accomplishment of yagya, alms-giving, and penance with absolute trust in tat, i.e., that God.

Krishn next elucidates the meaning and use of sat.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥२६॥

[ “Sat is employed to express the ideas of truth and excellence, and, O Parth, the word is also used to denote a propitious act.” ]

At the beginning of the Geeta, Arjun held forth that family traditions alone were permanent and real. That provoked Krishn to ask him how he had become a victim of such a deluded notion. That which is real is never absent at any time and it cannot be annihilated, whereas that which is unreal has no existence at any time, and it cannot be otherwise. Now what is that which never has a being? Krishn affirmed while resolving these questions that the Self alone is real and also that

the bodies of all living beings are perishable. The Self is eternal, imperceptible, permanent, and immortal. This is the paramount truth.

Krishn remarks that this epithet of the Supreme Being, viz, sat, refers to truth and thus to the sense of perfection. Arjun is further told that the expression sat is employed when the commencement of the undertaken task is complete in every respect and well under way. Sat by no means implies that all these objects are ours. How can things our physical bodies make use of belong to us when we are not masters of even our own persons? The application of sat is ever aimed in the same direction-of faith in the verity that the Self is the most sublime reality. The word sat is used when there is firm belief in this truth, when there is a hankering after perfection to realize this truth, and when the action that effects this realization begins to get along well. On the same subject of reality the Yogeshwar speaks again.

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥२७॥

[ "And it is said that the condition inherent in yagya, penance, and charity, as well as the endeavour to attain to God, is also real." ]

Only action that is entered upon for the attainment of God is real; and yagya, alms-giving, and atonement are but complements to this undertaking. Finally, Krishn affirms decisively that faith is an essential requisite of all these undertakings.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत्।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥२८॥

[ "Therefore, O Parth, is it said that, devoid of faith, the oblation and alms that are offered and the penance that is suffered, as well as all other similar ventures, are all false, for they can do us good neither in this world nor in the next.'' ]

All that is done without genuine trust and reverence-whether sacrifice or charity or self-mortification by way of contrition-is unreal. This is said, for such deeds are beneficial neither in this life nor after death. Faith combined with self-surrender is, therefore, a crucial necessity.

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At the beginning of the chapter Arjun wishes to be instructed by the Lord on the nature of the faith of men who set upon the task of worship in violation of scriptural injunction. Who among us does not know the many who persist in adoring ghosts and spirits? What is the nature of their faith? Is it moral, impulsive, or steeped in ignorance and therefore evil? Krishn's answer to the question is that since faith is inherent in man, he cannot but believe in something here or there. So he is shaped by his leaning and faith. Determined respectively by properties of sattwa, rajas and tamas, faith is of three kinds. While men with righteous faith adore gods and men of illusion are devotees of yaksh (source of renown and valour) and demons (personification of wealth and brutish conduct), the ignorant venerate ghosts and spirits. By their various forms of worship that are lacking in spiritual approval, all such devotees not only impair the elements that they embody but also their finer resolutions and the God that dwell within them. These adulators of supernatural spirits, yaksh, demons, and diverse gods should indeed be looked upon as disposed to evil rather than as true worshippers.

It is for the third time now that Krishn has broached the subject of gods. He told Arjun, first in Chapter 7, that only misguided men who have been robbed of their discernment by lust worship gods. Reverting to the problem in Chapter 9, he asserted that even worshippers of the many gods really worship him-the one eternal, immutable God. However since the practice is contrary to scriptural provision, this worship of theirs is but futile. And now here, in Chapter 17, Krishn classifies these worshippers

as the most debased, for the only form of reverence countenanced by him is the worship of the one God.

Subsequently Yogeshwar Krishn deals with four vital issues, of food, yagya, atonement, and alms-giving. Food is said to be of three categories. Men who are endowed with moral virtue relish food that is nutritious, naturally pleasing, and soothing. Men who are given to passion and moral confusion are fond of dishes that are pungent, hot, tantalizing, and injurious to health. And ignorant men with a wicked leaning hanker after stale and unclean fare.

If taken up and accomplished in the way provided by scripture, yagya (internal meditative exercises that subdues the mind and is free from desire is morally worthwhile. Yagya that is performed to flaunt oneself and as just a venture for the gratification of some desire is morally reprehensible. The lowest of all, however, is yagya that is rightly called evil, for it is divested of scriptural sanction and embarked on without incantation of sacred (Vedic) hymns, spirit of sacrifice, and true dedication.

Reverent service to a teacher-preceptor, who has all the virtues that can provide access to the Supreme God, and sincere contrition that observes the principles of non-injury, continence, and purity constitute penance of the body. Speaking that which is true, agreeable, and benign is the penance of speech. Bringing the mind to bear upon the required action and holding it in a state of silent meditation on the cherished goal alone and nothing else is penance of the mind. But the penance that is complete and perfect in all respects is that which involves the mind, speech, and body all.

Alms given reverentially out of a Sense of moral obligation and with a due regard for suitable place and time as well as for worthiness of the recipient are good. But alms given with reluctance and hope of some

consequent profit are an outcome of passion, while alms given with disdain to an undeserving beneficiary are caused by ignorance.

Identifying the character of OM, tat arid sat, Krishn says that these names awaken memories of God. OM is intoned at the initiation of penance, charity, and yagya that are in keeping with the way prescribed by scripture; and the sacred sound stays with the seeker until the consummation of his enterprise. Tat signifies the yonder God. The ordained action can be accomplished only with a sense of total resignation and sat manifests itself only when the venture has got well under way. Worship of God alone is reality. Sat is put to use when the devotee is convinced of the truth and possessed by a craving for perfection. Sat is relevant, too, to the final conclusion of the action, comprising yagya, charity, and penance, that is capable of taking one to God. The deeds that provide access to God are doubtlessly real. But along with all these, faith is a prime necessity. Undertaken without faith, the action that is accomplished, the alms that are given, and the fire of penance in which the worshipper has burnt himself-are all in vain, profitless both in the present life and in the lives to come. Faith is thus imperative.

Thus, through the whole chapter, light is shed on faith; and in its concluding part there is attempted-for the first time in the Geeta-a detailed elucidation of OM, tat and sat.

Thus concludes the Seventeenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between 'Krishn and Arjun' entitled : "**OM Tatsat Shraddhatya Vibhag Yog''** or "**The Yog of Three Fold Faith''**.

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Seventeenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## CHAPTER : 18

# The Yog of Renunciation

This is the last chapter of the Geeta, the first half of which is devoted to the resolution of several questions posed by Arjun, whereas the latter half is the conclusion which dwells upon the many blessings that flow from the sacred work. Chapter 17 classified and elucidated food, penance, yagya, charity, and faith. In the same context, however, the different forms of renunciation (sanyas) have yet not been touched upon. What is the motive for whatever man does? Who is the motivator-God or nature? The question was raised earlier, but the present chapter again sheds light on it. Likewise, the subject of the “quadritype” division of men was broached earlier, but the present chapter again takes it up and closely analyzes its character within the framework of nature. Then, at the end, numerous advantages that ensue from the Geeta are illuminated.

After having listened to Krishn’s categorization of various subjects in the previous chapter, Arjun now also desires to be enlightened on the different forms of renunciation (sanyas) and relinquishment (tyag).

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम्।**

**त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥१॥**

[ “Arjun said, ‘I am curious to learn, O the mighty armed, O Hrishikesh, master of the senses and slayer of demons the principles of relinquishment and of renunciation.’ ’’ ]

Total abandonment is renunciation, a state in which even will and merits of action cease to be, and prior to which there is only endless giving up of attachment for fulfillment of the spiritual quest. There are two questions here: Arjun wants to know the essence of renunciation as well as the essence of relinquishment. Thereupon Yogeshwar Krishn says:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥२॥

[ ‘‘The Lord said, ‘Whereas numerous scholars use renunciation for the giving up of covered deeds many others of mature judgement use relinquishment to name the abnegation of the fruits of all action.’’’ ]

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥३॥

[ “While many erudite men insist that since all actions are vile they ought to be forsaken, other scholars proclaim that deeds such as yagya, charity, and penance ought not to be forsaken.’’ ]

After thus submitting varied opinions on the problem, the Yogeshwar advances his own definitive view.

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम।

त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥४॥

[ “Listen, O the best of Bharat, to my notion of renunciation and of how, O the unmatched among men, this renunciation is said to be of three kinds.” ]

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥५॥

[ “Rather than forsaking them, deeds such as yagya, charity, and penance ought certainly to be undertaken as a duty, for yagya, charity, and penance are deeds that redeem men of wisdom.” ]

Krishn has thus submitted four prevalent thoughts. First, that coveted deeds should be foresworn. Second, that the fruits of all action should be given up. Third, that all actions should be relinquished, for they are all blemished. And fourth, that it is wrong to forego yagya, charity, and penance. Expressing his accord with one of these thoughts, Krishn says that it is also his conclusive view that yagya, charity and penance are not to be forsaken. This illustrates how divergent views on the question were current at Krishn’s time, too, out of which, one was true. Even today there are many views. When a sage makes his advent in the world he isolates and puts forward that which is the most salutary among the many varying doctrines. All great Souls have done this and Krishn has done the same. Instead of advocating a new way he only supports and expounds that which is true among many accepted views.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च।

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥६॥

[ “It is my considered belief, O Parth, that these deeds as also all others ought certainly to be accomplished after forsaking attachment and desire for the fruits of labour.’’ ]

Replying to Arjun’s question, Krishn then examines relinquishment.

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते।

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥७॥

[ “And, since the requisite action ought not to be abandoned, forsaking it out of some misconception is deemed as renunciation of the nature of ignorance (tamas).” ]

According to Krishn the ordained, essential action is only one-the performance of yagya. The Yogeshwar has reverted to and stressed the ordained mode time and again, lest the seeker should deviate from the right path. And now he declares that it is improper to abandon this ordained action. Forsaking it out of some delusion is thus said to be relinquishment of the diabolical kind (that is, of the nature of tamas). The deed that ought to be done and the ordained action are the same, and giving it up out of involvement in objects of sensual pleasure is morally, improper, The man who abandons such action is doomed to rebirth in low forms, for he has suppressed the impulse for divine adoration.

Krishn next speaks about relinquishment that is tainted by passion and moral blindness (rajas).

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत्।

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥८॥

[ “He who rashly foregoes action under the assumption that all of it is grievous, or out of fear of physical suffering, is deprived of the merits of his relinquishment.’’ ]

One who is incapable of worship and who casts off action because of his apprehension of physical pain is reckless and morally in error, and his relinquishment-of the nature of passion (rajas)- fails to bring him the ultimate repose of mind that should be the end of relinquishment.

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन।

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥९॥

[ “Only that relinquishment is esteemed righteous, O Arjun, which is ordained and practised with the conviction that doing it after having forsaken attachment and fruits of labour is a moral commitment.” ]

So only the ordained deed is to be done and all else has to be discarded. However, shall we go on doing it endlessly or will there be a point when it too is given up? Speaking of this, Krishn now points out the way of relinquishment that is good and worthwhile.

**न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते।**

**त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥१०॥**

[ “Gifted with flawless moral excellence and freedom from doubt, one who neither abhors deeds that are unpropitious nor is enamoured of those that are propitious is wise and self-denying.” ]

Only the action prescribed by scripture is auspicious and all that is opposed to it is mere bondage of this mortal world and therefore inauspicious. The person of equanimity, who neither loathes what is inauspicious nor is attached to that which is auspicious, because for such a person even that which had to be done has at last come to an end, is imbued with righteousness, emancipated from doubt, and discerning. So such a person is enabled to disown all. This total relinquishment, coming along with accomplishment, is renunciation. Is there, we might be tempted to ask, any easier way? Krishn categorically denies the possibility.

**न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः।**

**यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥११॥**

[ “Since the abandonment of all action by an embodied being is impossible, the one who has given up the fruits of action is credited with having practised relinquishment.’’ ]

“Embodied beings” does not imply only gross, visible bodies. According to Krishn the three properties of virtue (sattwa), passion (rajas), and ignorance (tamas), born out of nature, imprison the Soul within the body. The Soul is embodied only as long as these properties remain. So long he will have to pass from one body to another, for the properties that beget the body are still in existence. Since an embodied Soul cannot eschew all action, it is said that one who has given up the fruits of action has mastered renunciation. Hence it is that it is imperative to do the prescribed deed and renounce its fruits so long as the properties that make the body remain. If, on the other hand, actions are undertaken with some desire or the other, they do bear fruits.

**अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम्।**

**भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥१२॥**

[ “Whereas the triple returns-good, bad, and mixed-of covetous people’s actions, issue forth even after death, the actions of people who have renounced all, do not ever bear any fruits.’’ ]

The deeds of avaricious men produce consequences that arise even after death. These consequences indeed persist through endless births. But the actions of those who have relinquished all-of true sanyasi (so called because they have given up all their possessions)-do not bear fruits at any time. This is complete renunciation the highest stage of spiritual seeking.

The examination of the outcome of good and bad deeds, and of their ceasing at the point where all desire is annihilated, is thus concluded. Krishn then takes up the causes that effect righteous and unrighteous actions.

**पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे।**

**सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥१३॥**

[ “Learn well from me, O the mighty-armed, the five principles that Sankhya* *[*Sankhya is the name of one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy. It is so called because it enumerates twenty-five tattva or true principles; and its chief object is to secure the final emancipation of the twenty-fifth tattva, i.e. the Purush or Soul, from the bonds of wordly existence by imparting knowledge of the twenty-four other tattva and by properly distinguishing the Soul from them.]* acknowledges as accomplishers of all action.” ]

**अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम्।**

**विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥१४॥**

[ “In respect of this, there are the prime mover, the several agents, the varied endeavours, the sustaining power, and likewise the fifth means that is providence.’’ ]

The mind is the doer. Virtuous and evil inclinations are the agents. Performance of righteous action demands a predisposition to discernment, non-attachment, tranquillity, self-restraint, sacrifice, and constant meditation. But lust, anger, infatuation, aversion, and avarice are the agents that effect unrighteous deeds. There are then the manifold efforts-the endless desires-and the means. That aspiration begins to be fulfilled which is supported by means. And last of all there is the fifth principle, providence or sanskar-the outcome of all that has happened to the Soul in the past. This is borne out by Krishn.

**शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः।**

**न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥१५॥**

[ ‘‘These are the five causes of whatever action a man accomplishes with his mind, speech, and body, either in accordance with or even in contravention of scripture.” ]

**तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः।**

**पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥१६॥**

[ “Despite this, however he who-out of his immature judgement-views the consummate, detached Self as the doer is dull-minded and he sees not.’’]

As the Soul is identical with God, the pronouncement also implies that God does not act.

This is the second time that the Yogeshwar has stressed the point. He said in Chapter 5 that God neither acts himself nor impels others to act, nor does he bring about even the association of actions. Then why do we say that everything is done by God? It is only because our minds are clouded by delusion. We just say whatever comes to our mind. However, as Krishn has affirmed, there are five causes of action. Yet the ignorant man, incapable of perceiving the reality, views the lone, Godlike Soul as the doer. He fails to realize that God does not perform any deed. Paradoxically, however, while saying all this, Krishn also girds up his loins for Arjun and assures him that he has just to play the part of an instrument, for he (Krishn) is the real doer-arbiter. What after all is the sage’s import?

In truth, there is a line of gravity that separates God from nature. So long as the seeker is within the boundaries of nature, of the three properties, God does not act. While abiding close by the worshipper, he is yet only an onlooker. But when the seeker gets hold of the cherished goal with firm intentness, God begins to regulate his inner life. The seeker then breaks free from the gravity of nature and enters the realm of God. God ever stands by such a seeker. But he acts only for a worshipper such as this. So let us always meditate on him.

**यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते।**

**हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥१७॥**

[ ‘‘Though he may slay, the man who is liberated from conceit and whose mind is unsullied is neither a killer nor bound by his action.” ]

Rather than granting licence to kill without any fear, the verse signifies that the truly liberated person acts as a mere instrument of the Supreme Spirit. Such a person may sometimes be compelled to do even violent and awesome deeds (like Arjun), but he undertakes them in a wholly detached and selfless spirit as well as with the conviction that doing them is his bounden duty. So, although such a liberated person slays from the worldly point of view, he does not really slay. In truth, however, one who dwells in constant awareness of God is of necessity disinclined to anything that is evil. Such a person is simply not tempted to destroy, for the world which tempts people to destroy no longer exists for him because of his total renunciation of the aggregate of all his deeds.

**ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना।**

**करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥१८॥**

[ "Whereas the way of securing knowledge, the worthwhile knowledge, and the knower constitute the threefold inspiration to action, the doer, the agents, and the action itself are the threefold constituents of action.'' ]

Arjun is told that the impetus to action is derived from all-knowing seers, the mode of acquiring knowledge, and the object that is worthy of being acquired. Krishn has said earlier that he is the object worth knowing. The stimulus to action is derived only when there is a realized sage with perfect knowledge who can initiate the seeker into the way by which the desired knowledge can be obtained, and when the seeker's eyes are fixed on his goal. Similarly, the store of action begins to grow by the coming together of the doer-dedication of mind, agents such as wisdom, disinterest in the material world, repose, and self-restraint by which the action is accomplished, and awareness of the action. It has been pointed out earlier that neither does the undertaking of action by the seeker after accomplishment have any purpose, nor is

there any loss even in its abandonment. Yet he engages in action even then for the generation of virtuous powers in the hearts of those who are left behind. This is effected by the confluence of the doer, the agents, and the action itself.

Knowledge, action, and the doer are also each of three kinds.

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥१९॥

[ "Listen to me well on how even knowledge and action and the doer have been graded into three kinds each, in the Sankhya philosophy of properties (gun).'' ]

The next verse throws light upon the character of virtuous knowledge.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥२०॥

[ "Know that knowledge as immaculate (sattwik) by which one perceives the reality of the indestructible God as an undivided entity in all divided beings.'' ]

Such knowledge is direct perception, with which the properties of nature come to an end. It marks the culmination of awareness. Let us now see knowledge of the second (rajas) kind.

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान्।

वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥२१॥

[ "Know that knowledge as tainted by passion by which one perceives divided entities in all separate beings.'' ]

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम्।

अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥२२॥

[ “And know that knowledge as besmirched by ignorance (tamas) which adheres to the body alone as if it were the whole truth, and which is irrational, unfounded on truth, and petty.’’ ]

Devoid of wisdom and the required discipline to buttress it, this kind of knowledge is worthless as it takes one away from awareness of God who is the one and only reality.

The following verses then recount the three kinds of action.

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम्।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥२३॥

[ “That action is said to be immaculate which is ordained and embarked on with detachment, by one who is free from infatuation as well as loathing, and who does not aspire to any reward.’’ ]

The ordained action is none other than worship and meditation that lead the Soul to God.

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः।

क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥२४॥

[ “And that action is said to be of the nature of passion which is strenuous and entered upon by one who covets rewards and is egotistic.’’ ]

This seeker also performs the ordained action, but what a great difference is made by the fact that he is desirous of rewards and possessed of vanity? So the action undertaken by him bears the character of moral blindness.

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम्।

मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥२५॥

[ ‘‘That action is said to be unenlightened which is taken up out of sheer ignorance and with disregard for outcome, loss to oneself, and injury to others, as well as for one’s own competence.’’ ]

Such action is bound to be reduced to nothingness at last and it is unquestionably not approved by scripture. Rather than action it is mere delusion.

Let us now see the attributes of the doer.

**मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः।**

**सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥२६॥**

[ “That doer is said to be of immaculate nature who is free from attachment, who does not indulge in arrogant speech, and who is endowed with patience and vigour as well as unswayed by success and failure.’’ ]

These are the attributes of the righteous doer and the action he undertakes is, of course, the same ordained action.

**रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः।**

**हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥२७॥**

[ ‘‘That doer is said to be of the attribute of passion who Is impulsive, covetous of the fruits of action, acquisitive, pernicious, vitiated, and subject to joy and sorrow.’’ ]

**अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः।**

**विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥२८॥**

[ “That doer is said to be of the attribute of ignorance who is fickle, uncouth, vain, devious, spiteful, dispirited, lazy, and procrastinating.’’ ]

These are the attributes of the ignorant doer. The scrutiny of the qualities of doers is concluded at this point and Yogeshwar Krishn now

embarks on an examination of the attributes of judgement (intellect), resolve, (steadfastness) and felicity (happiness).

**बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु।**

**प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनंजय ॥२९॥**

[ "Listen to me, too, O Dhananjay, on the threefold classification according to the properties of nature as I make them exhaustively and respectively, of intellect, steadfastness, and happiness.'' ]

**प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये।**

**बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३०॥**

[ "That intellect is immaculate, O Parth, which is aware of the essence, of the way of inclination as also of renunciation, of worthy and unworthy action, of fear and fearlessness, and of bondage and liberation.'' ]

In other words, the righteous, morally good intellect is that which is aware of the distinction between the way that leads to God and the way to recurrent birth and death.

**यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च।**

**अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३१॥**

[ ''That intellect is of the nature of passion and moral blindness, O Parth, by which one cannot even know the righteous and the unrighteous as well as what is worthy or unworthy of being done.'' ]

**अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता।**

**सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३२॥**

[ "That intellect is of the nature of ignorance, O Parth, which is enveloped in darkness and which apprehends the sinful as virtuous and views everything in a distorted way.'' ]

In verses 30-32 thus, intellect is graded into three kinds. The intellect which is well aware of the action that has to be engaged in and the action that has to be shunned, as well as of that which is fit or unfit to be done, is characterized by moral excellence. The intellect which has only a dim perception of the righteous and the unrighteous action, and which does not know the truth, is dominated by passion. The perverse intellect that deems the sinful as virtuous, the destructible as eternal, and the inauspicious as auspicious, is shrouded in the gloom of ignorance.

The discussion of intellect is concluded here and Krishn next takes up the three kinds of steadfastness.

**धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः।**

**योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३३॥**

[ ''That resolute steadfastness, by which, O Parth, one governs through the practice of yog operations of the mind, the life-breaths, and the senses, is immaculate.'' ]

Yog is the process of meditation, whereas the coming into mind of any impulse other than the impulse to such contemplation is moral transgression. Straying of the mind is deviation from the path of virtue. The unwavering resolution with which a man rules over his mind, breath, and senses is, therefore, of the nature of goodness. Directing the mind, the vital breaths, and the senses towards the desired goal is the morally excellent fortitude.

**यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन।**

**प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३४॥**

[ ''That steadfastness, O Parth, by which the avaricious man holds fast and acquisitively to obligations, wealth, and pleasure, is of the nature of passion and moral blindness.'' ]

Firmness of will in this case is concerned primarily with the discharging of one’s worldly duties, acquisition of wealth, and sensual pleasure, the three primary objects of material life, rather than with final liberation. The final end may be the same, but in this case the seeker aspires to fruits and desires something in return for his labour.

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च।

न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३५॥

[ “(And) that steadfastness, O Parth, by which the evil-minded man declines to forsake sloth, fear, worry, grief, and also arrogance, is of the nature of ignorance.’’ ]

Krishn next considers the three types of happiness-

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ।

अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥३६॥

[ ‘‘Now listen to me, O the best of Bharat, on the three kinds of happiness, including the felicity, which one comes to dwell in, by practice and thus achieves cessation of griefs.’’ ]

That happiness is which the seeker attains to, by spiritual discipline by concentrating his or her mind on the cherished goal and this happiness is therefore a destroyer of griefs.

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम्।

तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥३७॥

[ “That happiness which is at first like poison but finally tastes like nectar, for it issues forth from the lucidity of an intellect that has realized the Self, is of an impeccable nature.” ]

The happiness that is come by through spiritual exercise, concentration of mind on the desired end, and in which all griefs come to an end, is bitter like venom at the commencement of worship. Prahlad

was hanged and Meera was poisoned. Sant Kabir has pointed out the difference between the pleasure-loving world, that feasts and fails into unconscious slumber, and himself who stays awake shedding tears of contrition. But although this happiness is like poison at the outset, at the end it is like nectar that confers the substance of immortality. Such happiness, born out of a clear understanding of the Self, is said to be pure.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम्।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥३८॥

[ "That happiness which springs from the association of the senses with their objects, and which is like nectar at the beginning but like gall at the end, is said to be tainted with passion and moral blindness.'' ]

The happiness obtained from the contact of the senses with their objects tastes like nectar in the course of enjoyment but like poison at the end, for this kind of happiness leads to repeated birth and death. So such happiness is rightly said to be impassioned and afflicted with moral blindness.

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः।

निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥३९॥

[ "That happiness which both initially and finally beguile the Self, and which arises from slumber, lethargy, and negligence, is said to be of the nature of ignorance.'' ]

The happiness which both in the course of indulgence and subsequently, deludes the Soul, lays one unconscious in the dark night of worldly life, and which is born out of indolence and futile efforts, is of the nature of ignorance.

Krishn then proceeds to recount the scope of the properties of nature that ever pursue us.

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः।

सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥४०॥

[ "There is no being, either on earth or among the dwellers of heaven, who is entirely free from the three properties born of nature." ]

All beings, right from Brahma at the top to worms and insects at the lowest, are transient, mortal, and under the sway of the three properties (Sattwa, rajas and tamas). Even heavenly beings including the various external gods, are subject to the malady of these properties.

Here, Yogeshwar Krishn has taken up the subject of external gods for the fourth time. That is, gods were spoken of in chapter 7,9, and 17. All the statements so far made by Krishn, imply that gods are influenced by the three properties of nature. Those who worship such gods, in reality worship that which is perishable and impermanent.

In the third section of Shreemad Bhagavat, while describing the meeting of nine Yogeshwars with the exalted sage Sukra, during the discourses, the sage Sukra said, that for love between male and female, the Lord Sankara and his consort Parvathi, for sound health the Ashwani Kumars (the celestial physician twins), for victory the Lord Indra (god Lord of heaven) and for material riches, Kuber (god protector of wealth), are to be worshipped. Similarly, talking of various desires at the end, he gave verdict that for fulfillment of all desires and for salvation one should worship the Lord Narayan alone.

Therefore, one should remember the Omnipresent Lord and for such accomplishment the only available means is to take refuge in an accomplished teacher, asking sincere questions and rendering service. Now see in this -

The devilish and divine treasures are two traits of the inner realm, out of which the divine treasures enable one to have the great vision of the Supreme Being, hence they are called divine but yet are

within the influence of the three properties of nature. When the three properties of nature are pacified, the seeker too shall experience that absolute peace within. After this, such a realized sage- yogi shall have no more duties that he needs to perform and he will have attained the state of actionlessness.

The question of the organization of men into four classes (varn) that was initiated much earlier is now reintroduced. Is one's class determined by birth, or is it the name of the inner ability gained from one's action?

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परन्तप।

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥४१॥

[ "The duties of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, as also of Shudr are determined by properties that are born out of their nature.'' ]

If a man's nature is made up of the property of goodness, there is inner purity along with the ability to meditate and worship. If the dominating property is that of ignorance, lethargy, sleep, and insanity are the outcome, and the attempted action is at their level. The capacity of one's natural property is his varn-his character. Similarly, a partial combination of goodness and passion constitutes the Kshatriya class, whereas a partial combination of the property of ignorance and that of passion constitutes the Vaishya class.

This is the fourth time when Yogeshwar Krishn has taken up the issue. He named Kshatriya in Chapter 2 and said that "there is nothing more propitious for a Kshatriya than a righteous war." (verse 31) In Chapter 3 he said that although inferior in merit, one's own natural calling (dharm) is the best and even meeting with death while upholding it results in good, whereas an obligation other than one's own, even though well observed, generates nothing but dread.(verse 35) In Chapter 4, then, he indicated that he is the creator of the four classes.(verse 13)

Does he mean by this that he has divided men into four rigid castes determined by birth? His answer to the question is an emphatic no, and he asserts that he has but divided action into four categories according to their inherent properties. The innate property of a being or object is a measure-a yardstick. So the division of mankind into four varn is only a division of the one and same action into four stages according to the motivating properties. In Krishn's words, action is the mode of attaining to the one, inexpressible God. The conduct that takes one to God is worship, which commences in faith in the desired end. So meditation on the Supreme Being is the one true action that Krishn has-divided into four steps in his system of varn. Now, how are we to know to which property and stage we belong? This is what Krishn turns to in the following verses.

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४२॥

[ "Self-restraint, subduing of the senses, innocence, continence, mercy, uprightness, piety, true knowledge, and direct perception of divinity are the Brahmins province-born our of his nature." ]

Restraining the mind, curbing the senses, flawless purity, mortification of mind, speech, and body to mould them in tune with the cherished goal, forgiveness, all-pervading righteousness, staunch faith in the one aimed at goal, consciousness of the Supreme Being, the awakening in the realm of the heart of the exhortations coming from God, and the ability to act according to them-are all a Brahmin 's obligations that arise from his own nature. It might be said, therefore, that the seeker is a Brahmin when all these merits are present in him and the commenced action is an integral part of his nature.

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम्।

दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४३॥

[ "Valour, majesty, dexterity, unwillingness to retreat in battle, charity, and sovereignty are the natural province of a Kshatriya." ]

Bravery, achievement of divine glory, forbearance, competence in meditation-skill in action, disinclination to run away from struggle with the material world, relinquishment of all, and domination of all feelings by feeling for the Supreme Being-are all activities born out of the nature of a Kshatriya.

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम्।

परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥४४॥

[ "Farming, protection of cows (the senses) and commerce are the natural province of a Vaishya, whereas rendering service is the natural calling of a Shudr.'' ]

Agriculture, rearing of cattle, and commerce are duties in keeping with the nature of a Vaishya. Why only preservation of cows? Should we slaughter buffaloes? Is it wrong to keep goats? There is nothing at all like all this. In the ancient Vedic text, the word "go" (cow) was used to refer to the senses. So protection of "cows" means care of the senses. The senses are protected by discernment, non-attachment, restraint, and steadfastness. They are, on the other hand, riven and rendered feeble by lust, wrath, avarice, and attachment. Spiritual acquisition is the only true wealth. This is our one true asset and once it has been earned, it stays on with us forever. Gradual amassing of this wealth in the course of our struggle with the world of matter or nature is trade. The acquisition of knowledge, which is the most precious of all riches, is commerce. And what is farming? The body is like a piece of earth. The seeds which are sown in it sprout in the form of sanskar-the

merits of action: the force that is built up by all the actions in previous lives. Arjun is told that the seed (the initial impulse) of selfless action is never destroyed. Vaishya is the third step of the ordained action- of contemplation of the Supreme Being; and preservation of the seeds of divine meditation that are sown in this patch of earth-the body, while at the same time opposing hostile impulses, is agriculture. As Goswami Tulsidas has said, whereas the wise husbandsman farms well and with care, they who are of deficient wisdom are insensible and arrogant. To protect the senses thus, to store spiritual wealth amidst the skirmishes of nature, and to always strengthen contemplation of the ultimate essence are the province of Vaishya.

According to Krishn, the omnipresent God is the final outcome of yagya. The devout souls who partake of this fruit are emancipated from all sins and it is the seeds of this action that are sown by the meditative process. To protect this germ is true husbandry. In Vedic writings food means the Supreme Spirit. God is the only real sustenance-the food. The Soul is fully placated at the completion of the exercise of contemplation and never again knows any craving. Once the exercise has been brought to successful conclusion, the Soul is freed from the cycle of birth and death. To go ahead sowing the seeds of this food is true husbandry.

To serve those who have attained to a higher spiritual status, revered men of accomplishment, is the duty of Shudr. Rather than meaning “base’’, Shudr means “one with deficient knowledge.” It is the seeker at the lowest stage who is a Shudr. It is but proper that this initiate worshipper should begin his quest with rendering service. Service to men of accomplishment will in the course of time generate nobler impulses in him and he will thus gradually move up to the higher Vaishya, Kshatriya, and Brahmin stages. And ultimately he will go beyond varn (properties of nature) and become one with God. Character is a dynamic entity. There is change in an individual’s varn along with

changes in his character. So, in fact, varn are the four-excellent, good, medium, and low-stages: the four steps, low and high, which seekers who tread the path of action have to climb. This is so because the action in question is only one-the ordained action. The only way to final attainment according to Krishn is that the worshipper should begin his journey in keeping with the attributes of his own nature.

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥४५॥

[ "Commitment to his own inborn duty brings man to the ultimate accomplishment and you should listen to me on how a man achieves perfection through dedication to his innate calling.'' ]

The perfection that is ultimately achieved is realization of God. Krishn told Arjun earlier, too, that he would reach this final goal by engaging in action-the real, prescribed action.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥४६॥

[ "By adoration of that God, who has created all beings and who pervades the whole universe, through the undertaking of his natural calling, man attains to final accomplishment.'' ]

The seeker achieves final consummation through performance of his native duties. It is, therefore, essential that he should constantly keep his mind fixed on God, adore him, and proceed on his way step by step. Instead of making any gain, a junior student even loses whatever he has if he sits in a senior class. So the law is that one should climb step by step. It was said in the sixth verse of this chapter that yagya, charity, and penance ought to be undertaken after abandonment of attachment and fruits of action. Now, stressing the same point, Krishn says again that

even a partially enlightened man ought to begin from the same point: from self-surrender to God.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥४७॥

[ "Even though unmeritorious, one's own native calling is superior to the office of others, for a man carrying out his natural obligation does not bring sin upon himself." ]

Although inferior, one's own obligation is better than even the well performed duties of others. A man absorbed in performing a task that is determined by his own nature does not incur sin in so far as he is not subjected to the endless cycle of "entrances" and "exits"-of birth and death. It is quite often that worshippers begin to feel disenchanted with the service they are rendering-. They look at the more accomplished seekers who are absorbed in meditation and grow envious of the honour that is accorded them because of their merits. So novices at once fall to imitating. According to Krishn, however, imitation or envy can be of no avail. The final accomplishment is only by dedication to one's own native calling, not by its abandonment.

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत्।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥४८॥

[ "One's innate duty ought not to be forsaken, O son of Kunti, even if it is blemished, because all actions are impaired by some flaw or the other as fire is shrouded by smoke." ]

It is but expected that the actions of the novice seeker are flawed, for their doer is yet far from perfection. But even these actions must not be given up. Moreover, there is no action that is unimpeachable. And action has to be undertaken even by one, who belongs to the Brahmin class. Imperfections-the obscuring pall of nature-

are there until there is steady devotion. They come to an end only when the action natural to a Brahmin is dissipated in God. But what are the attributes of the accomplisher at the point where action is no longer of any avail?

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः।

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥४९॥

[ “He whose intellect is aloof all round, who is without desire, and who has conquered his mind, attains to the ultimate state that transcends all action through renunciation.” ]

“Renunciation” is, as we have already seen, complete self-abnegation. It is the condition in which the seeker abandons whatever he has and only then does he reach the point when no further action is needed. “Renunciation” and “attainment of the supreme state of actionlessness” are synonymous here. The yogi who has reached the state of actionlessness attains to the Supreme Being.

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे।

समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥५०॥

[ “Learn in brief from me, O son of Kunti, of how one who is immaculate achieves realization of the Supreme Being, which represents the culmination of knowledge.’’ ]

The following verses expound that way.

बुद्ध्या विशुद्ध्या युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च।

शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥५१॥

[ “Blessed with a pure intellect, firmly in command of the Self, with objects of sensual gratification like sound forsaken , with both fondness and revulsion destroyed,-” ]

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः।

ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥५२॥

[ “Dwelling in seclusion, eating frugally, subdued in mind, speech and body, incessantly given to the yog of meditation, firmly resigned,-’’ ]

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम्।

विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥५३॥

[ “Giving up conceit, arrogance of power, yearning, ill humour, and acquisitiveness, devoid of attachment, and in possession of a mind at repose, a man is worthy of becoming one with God.” ]

It is Further said of such a worshipper:

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥५४॥

[ “In this serene-tempered man, who views all beings equally, who abides intently in the Supreme Being, neither grieving over nor hankering after anything, there is fostered a faith in me that transcends all else.’’ ]

Now faith is at the stage where an outcome can ensue from it, namely, in the form of God-realization.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥५५॥

[ “Through his transcendental faith he knows my essence well, what my reach is, and having thus known my essence he is at once united with me.” ]

The Supreme Being is perceived at the moment of attainment and, no sooner has this perception come about than the worshipper finds his own Soul blessed with the attributes of God himself: that his soul is-like God-indestructible, immortal, eternal, ineffable, and universal.

Krishn said in Chapter 2 that the Self is real, eternal, permanent, ineffable, and of the stuff of immortality. But only seers have apprehended him endowed with these qualities. So naturally the question arises as to what is meant by perception of the essence. There are many who set out to make rational tabulations of five or twenty-five principles. But Krishn's verdict on the problem in Chapter 18 is quite clear, that God is the one supreme essence. And one who knows him is the seer. If you desire to know the truth and crave for the essence of God, contemplation and worship are an inescapable necessity.

Here, in verses 49 to 55, Yogeshwar Krishn has laid down explicitly that one has to act in the way of renunciation, too. As promised by him, he will expound in brief how through constant exercise of renunciation-through the Way of Knowledge-the worshipper who is free from desire and attachment, and who has an upright mind, attains to the supreme state of actionlessness. When the maladies of vanity, brute power, lust, wrath, arrogance, and infatuation-that force one down into the ravines of nature-are rendered feeble, and virtues such as discernment, non-attachment, self-restraint, firmness of will, abiding in solitude, and meditation-that lead one to God-are fully developed and active, the seeker is equipped to be united with the Supreme Being. It is this ability that is called transcendental faith and it is by this that the worshipper comes to apprehend the ultimate reality. He then knows what God is and, knowing his divine glories, he is at once merged with him. Putting it differently, Brahm, reality, God, the Supreme Spirit, and Self are all substitutes for each other. Knowing any one of them, we come to know them all. This is the final accomplishment, the final liberation, the final goal.

So the Geeta is unambiguous in its view that in both the Way of Knowledge or Discernment (or the Way of Renunciation) and the Way of Selfless Action, the ordained deed-meditation-has to be entered upon

and accomplished for the attainment of the supreme state of actionlessness.

The importance of worship and meditation for the worshipper who has renounced all has been stressed so far. And now by introducing the idea of “devotion” the same is said for the yogi who undertakes selfless action.

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥५६॥

[ “Although engaged in action whole heartedly, one who finds refuge in me achieves the everlasting, indestructible, final bliss.’’ ]

The deed to be performed is the same-the ordained action, the exercise of yagya. And to gain it there must be self-surrender.

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥५७॥

[ “Earnestly resigning all your deeds to me, finding shelter in me, and embracing the yog of knowledge, you should ever fix your mind on me.” ]

Arjun is counselled to sincerely yield all his actions-whatever he is capable of doing-to Krishn, to rest in his mercy rather than depend upon his own prowess, to find shelter in him, to adopt the attitude of yog, and always bring his mind to bear on him. Yog means completion, unity, that which brings griefs to an end and provides access to God. Its mode, too, is a unity, the exercise of yagya which is founded on restraint of the attacking impulses of the mind and the senses, the regulation of the incoming and outgoing breath, and on meditation. Its outcome, also, is with the eternal God. The same is elaborated in the next verse.

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि।

अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥५८॥

[ “Ever resting on me, you will be saved from all afflictions and gain deliverance, but you shall be destroyed if out of arrogance you do not pay heed to my words .” ]

Thus always focusing his mind on Krishn, Arjun will conquer the citadels of the mind and the senses. As Goswami Tulsidas has put it, even celestial beings seated at the portals of these forts obstinately keep the shutters ajar as the breezes of carnal pleasure blow in. The mind and the senses at the core are the impregnable redoubts. But Arjun can storm them by aiming his thoughts at God alone. On the other hand, however, he shall be undone and deprived of the ultimate good if out of vanity he does not pay heed to Krishn’s words. The point is reaffirmed.

**यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे।**

**मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥५९॥**

[ “Your egotistic resolve not to fight is surely mistaken, for your nature will compel you to rake up arms in the war.’’ ]

**स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा।**

**कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥६०॥**

[ “Bound by your natural calling even against your resolve, O son of Kunti, you will have to undertake the deed you are reluctant to do because of your self-deception.” ]

His innate disinclination to retreat from the battle with nature will compel Arjun to set upon the task before him. The subject is concluded with this and Krishn next speaks on the dwelling of God.

**ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।**

**भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥६१॥**

[ “Propelling all living things that bestride a body-which is but a contrivance-by his maya, O Arjun, God abides in the hearts of all beings.’’ ]

But if God lives in our hearts and is so close to us, why are we ignorant of his presence? This is so because the contraptions we call body are driven by the power of maya, the universal ignorance or illusion by virtue of which we consider the unreal universe as real and distinct from the Supreme Spirit. So this physical mechanism is a grave impediment and it takes us round endlessly through one birth after another. Where, then, can we find shelter or refuge?

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥६२॥

[ “Seek refuge with all your heart, O Bharat, in that God by whose grace you will attain to repose and the everlasting, ultimate bliss.’’ ]

So if we have to meditate, we should do it within the realm of the heart. If we know this and yet seek for God in a temple, mosque or church, we but waste our time. Notwithstanding this, however, as it was said earlier too, these places of formal worship have their importance for seekers with inadequate awareness. The heart is the true abode of God. It is the message of even the Bhagwat Mahapuran: that although God is all-pervading, he is realized only by meditation in the realm of heart.

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥६३॥

[ “Thus have I imparted to you the knowledge which is the most mysterious of all abstruse learning; so reflect well on the whole of it (and then) you may do as you wish.” ]

The wisdom that Krishn has accorded is the truth; it marks the sphere where the seeker has to make his quest; and it is also the point of

attainment. Yet the harsh fact is that God is commonly not perceptible. Krishn now deliberates upon the way out of this difficulty.

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः।

इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥६४॥

[ “Listen yet again to my most secret words, indeed felicitous, that I am going to speak to you because you are the dearest to me.” ]

Krishn endeavours once more to enlighten Arjun. God always stands by the seeker, for he is so dear to him. Arjun is beloved of Krishn and any benediction that the Lord bestows upon him cannot be too much. He will incessantly exert himself for the sake of his devotee. But what is the blessed revelation that Krishn is going to make to Arjun?

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥६५॥

[ “I give you my sincere pledge, because you are so dear to me, that you must attain to me if you keep me in mind, adore me, worship me, and bow in obeisance to me.” ]

Arjun was exhorted earlier to seek refuge in the God that dwells in the realm of the heart. And now he is prompted to find shelter under Krishn. He is also told that in order to find this sanctuary he has to listen again to the Lord’s most esoteric words. Doesn’t Krishn intend to communicate by this that finding shelter under a noble teacher-preceptor is indispensable for the seeker who has taken to the spiritual path? Krishn, a Yogeshwar, then enlightens Arjun on the way of true self-surrender.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।

अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥६६॥

[ “Grieve not, for I shall free you from all sins if you abandon all other obligations (dharm) and seek refuge in me alone.” ]

Arjun is counselled that he has to rid himself of concern about what category of doer he is, whether Brahmin or Kshatriya or Vaishya or Shudr, and look for shelter under Krishn alone. By doing so he will be absolved of all iniquities and afflictions. The chosen teacher-preceptor takes it upon himself to effect the gradual elevation of the pupil to ever more refined spiritual states and his release from all sins if, instead of worrying about his position on the path of action, the pupil single-mindedly seeks refuge in his mentor, and looks up to no one else but his accomplished teacher-preceptor. All sages have said the same. When a holy writing is rendered, it may appear that it is for all, but it is truly “secret teaching”- secret undoubtedly because it is permitted only to those who are spiritually equipped to study and profit by it. Arjun is such a deserving pupil and so it is that Krishn instructs him so earnestly. Now Krishn himself elaborates the merits of the worthy pupil.

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥६७॥

[ “This (the Geeta) which has been articulated for you must never be made known to one who is bereft of penance, devotion, and of willingness to listen, as also to one who speaks ill of me.’’ ]

Krishn was a realized sage and, along with adorers, he must also have faced some slanderers. The Geeta is not for people who speak maliciously of God. But, then, to whom should this sacred knowledge be made known?

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति।

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥६८॥

[ “The one who, with firm devotion to me, imparts this most secret teaching of my worshippers will doubtlessly attain to me.’’ ]

And then Krishn speaks about the one who disseminates the sacred knowledge.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः।

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥६९॥

[ “Neither is there among mankind any doer who is dearer to me than this man, nor will there by any in the world who is dearer to me than him.’’ ]

The man who enlightens Krishn’s devotees, Souls who adhere to the Lord, is the most beloved of him because he is the only source of benediction-the only highway that leads one to God. He is the one who teaches men to go along the right path.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥७०॥

[ “And it is my belief that I shall have been worshipped through the yagya of knowledge by one who makes a thorough study of this sacred dialogue between us.’’ ]

The “yagya of knowledge” is that, the outcome of which is wisdom. The nature of this wisdom has been elaborated earlier. This wisdom is the awareness that is acquired along with direct perception of God. And it is with such wisdom, such awareness, that the dedicated and industrious disciple of the Geeta will adore Krishn. This is something of which the Lord is firmly assured.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥७१॥

[ ‘’Even he will be freed from sins who just hears it (the Geeta) with devoutness and without any ill will, and he will secure the worlds of the righteous.” ]

Even hearing the teachings of the Geeta with faith and without any carping is enough to elevate one to a superior mode of existence, for by this too its sacred precepts will be inculcated in the mind.

Krishn has thus, in verses 67 to 71, said that imparting of the teachings of the Geeta to the deserving is as vital as withholding them from the undeserving. Since even hearing the secret teaching of the Geeta motivates the worshipper to the required endeavour, the one who just hears it will also surely attain to Krishn. As for the one who propagates the scripture, no one else is dearer to the Lord than this man. The man who studies the Geeta worships Krishn by the yagya of knowledge. True knowledge is what issues forth from the process called yagya. In the verses under consideration, thus, the Lord has pointed out the benefits of study, dissemination, and hearing of the Geeta.

Now at the end he asks Arjun if has understood and assimilated his words.

**कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा।**

**कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥७२॥**

[ “Have you, O Parth, listened intently to my words and, O Dhananjay, is your delusion born our of ignorance dispelled?” ]

**अर्जुन उवाच**

**नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत।**

**स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥७३॥**

[ “Arjun said, ‘Since my ignorance has been dispelled by your grace, O Achyut, and I have recovered discernment, I am free from doubt and shall follow your precept.’ ’’ ]

“Achyuth ! Because of Your grace, my passion is destroyed, I have regained my memory, I am consistent, being bereft of doubts and am ever ready to obey Your orders.” Whereas, Arjun was perplexed at the time of reviewing both the armies, to find his kith and kin therein. He prayed “Govinda! How can we be happy after annihilation of our own relatives? Family tradition will be destroyed because of such a war, there will be scarcity of obsequial offerings like rice cakes and so on to the departed ancestors, hybridization or mongrelization of castes takes place. We, being wise, yet are ready to commit sin. Why do we not find a way out of committing these sins? Let the armed Kaurava kill me, an unarmed man, in the war and that death is glorious. Govinda, I am not going to wage war.” Saying thus he sat down at the back of the chariot.

Thus in the Geeta, Arjun, in fact, put forward in front of Yogeshwar Krishn a series of big and small questions. Like in chapter 2 verse 7, “Please will You tell me that practice of worship through which I can attain to the Absolute good.” In chapter 2 verse 54, “What are the attributes of an enlightened sage?” In verse 1 of chapter 3, “If in your view the way of knowledge is superior, then why do you compel me to do these terrible actions?” In verse 36 of chapter 3, “Even without wishing, under whose guidance does a man commit sin?” In verse 4 of chapter 4, “Your birth is of recent times, whereas the Sun was born a long time back, then how can I believe that You taught yog to the Sun in the far distant past, in the beginning of this kalp?’’ In verse 1 of chapter 5, “Sometimes You praise renunciation, the way of knowledge, and yet other times you support the Way of Selfless Action. Please tell me one out of these which is final, by which I can attain to the Absolute good.” In

verse 35 of chapter 6, “The Mind is very fickle. With slack efforts, what would be his lot?” In verses 1 and 2 of chapter 8, “Govinda, who is that Supreme Being, whom You have described? What is the religious knowledge? What are Lords of gods and Lord of being? Who is the Lord of sacrifice in this body? What is that action? How do You come to be known at the end time?” Thus he put forward seven questions. In verse 17 of chapter 10, Arjun has evinced curiosity, asking, ‘‘While meditating incessantly, through what feelings (emotions) do I call you to mind, to remember you ?’’ In verse 4 of chapter 11 he prayed and submitted, “I long to see the splendours that have been described by You.” In verse 1 of chapter 12, “Who is the superior possessor of Yoga among the devotees who worship you well through unvacillating attentiveness and those who worship the imperishable unmanifest Supreme Being?” In verse 21 of chapter 14, “A man who has surpassed the three natural modes is liberated of character and how can a man surpass these three modes?” In verse 1 of chapter 17, ‘‘what would be the fate of a person who engages in yagya with dedication but does not follow the procedure as laid down by the scriptures ?’’ And in verse 1 of chapter 18, “O’ mighty armed! I yearn to learn separately and individually everything about the nature of relinquishment and renunciation.”

Thus, throughout the Geeta, Arjun continued to put forward queries (The esoteric secrets which could not be asked by him were revealed by the Lord Himself.) As soon as his doubts were dispelled he was freed from asking questions and said,” Govinda! Now I am ever ready to obey your instructions.” In truth the questions raised were for the benefit of all mankind and not just for Arjun alone. Without having these questions answered, no seeker can progress forward on the path of the highest good. Therefore, to enable a man to obey an enlightened guru and to progress on the path of the highest good, it is necessary, that one should learn the complete teachings of the Geeta. Arjun was

convinced and satisfied that all his questions had been answered and his doubts allayed.

In Chapter 11,after having revealed his cosmic form, Krishn said in the fifty-fourth verse: “O Arjun ... a worshipper can directly know this form of mine, acquire its essence, and even become one with it by total and unswerving dedication.” And just now he has asked him whether he is rid of his delusion. Arjun replies that his ignorance is allayed and that his understanding is restored. Now he will act at Krishn’s behest. Arjun’s liberation should come along with this realization. He has indeed become whatever he had to be. But scripture is meant for posterity and the Geeta is here for all of us to avail ourselves of.

**संजय उवाच**

**इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः।**

**संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥७४॥**

[ “Sanjay said, Thus have I heard the mysterious and sublime dialogue of Vasudeo and the sage-like Arjun.’ ’’ ]

Arjun is portrayed as a man with a noble Soul. He is a yogi, a seeker, rather than an archer set to kill. But how has Sanjay been enabled to hear the dialogue between Krishn and the saintly Arjun?

**व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम्।**

**योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥७५॥**

[ “It is by the blessing of the most revered Vyas that I have heard this transcendental, most mysterious yog enunciated directly by the Lord of yog Krishn himself.” ]

Sanjay regards Krishn as a master of yog-one who is a yogi himself and who is also endowed with the gift of imparting yog to others.

**राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम्।**

**केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥७६॥**

[ "The recollection of the felicitous and marvellous colloquy between Keshav and Arjun transports me , O King (Dhritrashtr), to sublime joy time after time.'' ]

We too can experience Sanjay's bliss if we remember the sacred dialogue with perfect contentment. Sanjay then recalls the Lord's miraculous bearing and speaks of it.

**तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः।**

**विस्मयो मे महान राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥७७॥**

[ "Recalling the amazing visage of the Lord again and again, O King, I am lost in wonder and ecstasy over and over.'' ]

Sanjay's rapture can be ours, too, if we incessantly keep in our minds the aspect of the cherished end.

That brings us to the last verse of the Geeta in which Sanjay states his final conclusion.

**यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः।**

**तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥७८॥**

[ "Good fortune, conquest, splendour, and steadfast wisdom abide wherever are Lord Krishn and the noble archer Arjun : such is my conviction." ]

Intent contemplation and firm restraint of the senses are Arjun's bow-the legendary Gandeev. So it is that Arjun is a sage who meditates with equanimity. So wherever Yogeshwar Krishn and he are, there too dwell the triumph after which there is no defeat, the magnificence of God, and the firmness of resolve that enables one to be constant in this

inconstant world. Such is the well-deliberated judgement of Sanjay, of the seer who is gifted with celestial vision.

The great archer Arjun is no longer amidst us. But were steadfast wisdom and the glory that comes with spiritual conquest for him alone? The Geeta is a dramatization of a historical event that belonged to a certain time, namely the age that is known as Dwapar. This does not mean, however, that Arjun's realization of the truth of God came to an end with the ceasing of his time. Yogeshwar Krishn has assured us repeatedly that he abides in the realm of the heart. He exists within all of us. He is also within you. Arjun is a symbol of affectionate devotion, which is but another name of the mind's inclination and dedication to the cherished goal. If a worshipper is endowed with such devotion, perpetual triumph against the demeaning properties of nature is assured. With such devotion there must also always necessarily be steadfast wisdom. Rather than being confined to a certain place, time or individual, these attainments are universal-for ever and for all. So long as beings exist, God must dwell in their hearts and the Soul must impatiently hunger for the Supreme Being; and he who is affectionately devoted to God will attain to Arjun's status. Everyone of us can, therefore, aspire hopefully to the ultimate bliss of direct perception of God.

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At the beginning of the eighteenth, the concluding chapter of the Geeta, Arjun wishes to be enlightened on the similarity as well as the distinction between relinquishment and renunciation. In response to this Krishn cites four prevalent creeds. While many savants style the abandonment of all action as renunciation, several others employ the term to designate the giving up of desired action. Many scholars advocate the forsaking of all deeds since all of them are flawed, but others are convinced that deeds such as yagya, penance, and charity

ought not to be relinquished. One of these beliefs was right, too, and Krishn has pronounced a similar judgement, which is that yagya, penance, and charity must never be forsaken, for they bring deliverance to men of discernment. So fostering them while also giving up unrighteous impulses that are inimical to them is true renunciation. Such renunciation is perfect. But relinquishment with a desire for some profit in exchange is tainted by passion and moral blindness; and it is definitely evil when the prescribed deed is forsaken out of self deception. Renunciation is the crowning point of resignation. Performance of the prescribed task and the rapture that results from meditation are indeed virtuous, while sensual pleasure is an outcome of infatuation. And the pleasure in which there is no prospect whatsoever of the ultimate union with God undoubtedly issues forth from ignorance.

All deeds, whether done in accordance with scripture or against, are brought into being by five causes: the mind that is the doer, the various agents by which a deed is executed, the numerous desires all of which cannot be fulfilled, the indispensable power that upholds, and providence-the merits and demerits that have been harvested from the deeds of previous births. These are the five causes that effect all actions. Irrespective of this, however, there are men who believe that the perfect God is the doer. Such men are doubtlessly of immature judgement and unaware of truth. But, whereas Krishn affirms in the chapter that God does not act, he has also exhorted Arjun earlier to but stand as a proxy since he (Lord Krishn) is the one who acts and determines.

Krishn’s true message refers to the line of gravity that separates nature from man. So long as a man lives within nature, he is dominated by maya, God’s “divine consort” and the mother of all material objects. But no sooner has he risen above nature and given himself up to the final emancipation than he comes under the reign of God who now rises in his heart like a charioteer. Arjun belongs to the category of such men

and so does Sanjay. For others too there is the prescribed way by which they can break free from the tenacious attraction of nature. The stage following upon this is the one at which the guiding impulse comes from God himself. The impetus for the ordained action arises from the confluence of an all knowing sage, the right way of acquiring knowledge, and the Supreme Being who is the one object that ought to be known. So it is that it is an essential requirement for the seeker to take some sage as his teacher-preceptor.

For the fourth time in the Geeta, in the chapter Krishn also reverts to the four fold organization of men into classes (varn). Deeds that enable the Soul to become one with God, such as overcoming the senses, restraint of the mind, intentness, tuning the body, speech, and mind to the coveted end through self-mortification, and generation of divine awareness as well as of the readiness to adhere to God's directions-constitute the province of the Brahmin class. Prowess, unwillingness to retreat, mastery of impulses, and possession of the required skill for undertaking action-are all duties of the Kshatriya class. Care of the senses and promotion of spiritual plenty are innate obligations of the Vaishya class, while ministering to the needs of the spiritually adept is the calling of the Shudr class. Rather than alluding to any particular caste or tribe, "Shudr" only denotes the unenlightened man-the man who sits in meditation for two hours without really availing himself of even ten minutes of that time. It is true that his body is motionless, but the mind which has to be stilled ranges wildly all the while. Rendering service to men of a higher spiritual status-to some noble mentor-is the means by which a seeker like this can liberate his Self. Little by little, merits will then be engendered in him, too, and his worship set in motion. This unenlightened man's accomplishment must necessarily, therefore, commence with rendering service. The action is only one, the ordained action-meditation, It is its practitioners who are

divided into the four-excellent, good, medium, and inferior-categories of Brahmin , Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudr. So it is not society but action that has been divided into four classes on the basis of innate properties. Such is the character of varn postulated by the Geeta.

Elucidating the nature of reality, Krishn promises that he will instruct Arjun in the mode of that ultimate achievement which is the crowning point of knowledge. The worshipper is competent to perceive God when his wisdom, disinterest, self-control, fortitude, uninterrupted contemplation, and inclination to the meditative process-all attributes that enable the Soul to merge in the Supreme Being-are fully fledged, while at the same time afflictions such as desire, anger, delusion, fondness, and malice that hurl the Soul down into the ravines of nature are rendered inert.

This ability moulds the intent devotion that turns its eyes away from everything except the cherished goal. And it is only by such devotion that the worshipper gains awareness of reality. God alone is real and when the worshipper knows him and the celestial qualities of which he is possessed-that he is ineffable, eternal, and immutable-he at once comes to dwell in that God. So the essence is this ultimate reality rather than five or twenty-five elements. With the completion of worship the Soul is united with this essence and endowed with its sublime attributes.

Krishn further instructs Arjun that God, the ultimate reality, abides in the hearts of all beings. But men are unaware of this because, seated on the vehicle of maya, they stray and wander. So Arjun is exhorted to find shelter under the God who dwells in his heart. He ought to take refuge with all his mind, acts, and speech in Krishn. If he but renounces all other obligations, their merits too will all be bestowed on him. And as an outcome of this abandonment he will attain to Krishn. This is the most secret knowledge that must never be imparted to one

who is spiritually unworthy of receiving it. On the other hand, however, it is imperative to pass it on to truly devout men. Niggardliness in this respect is meanness, for how can the devotee be saved without this knowledge? At the end Krishn inquires if Arjun has listened attentively to his discourse, and whether he is rid of ignorance. Arjun's reply to this is that his illusion is dispelled and his discernment restored. He admits that what the Lord has told him is the truth and that he shall abide by his teachings.

Sanjay, who has heard the dialogue equally well, concludes that whereas Krishn is the supreme Yogeshwar-Lord of yog, Arjun is a sage-a man with a noble Soul. He is engulfed in wave after wave of joy as he recalls their colloquy. So we too should always bring our minds to bear upon the Supreme Spirit. Constant meditation on God is indispensable. Wherever Yogeshwar Krishn and the sage Arjun are, there too are magnificence, success, and steadfastness of resolve like the unshaken firmness of the Polar star. The ways of world that are today may change tomorrow. God alone is changeless. So the truly steadfast resolve is also that which enables the seeker to approach the immutable God. If Krishn and Arjun are taken as mere historical characters belonging to a certain age known as Dwapar, they are no longer with us today. Does it mean, however, that there is now neither conquest nor achievement for us? If that be so, the Geeta is of no value to us. But such is not the case. Krishn -an adept in yog-and Arjun-a sage with tender, affectionate devotion-are for ever. They have always been and they will always be. Introducing himself, Krishn says that although he is ineffable, the Supreme Being to whom he has attained dwells in the realm of all hearts. He has always abided there and he always will, and we all have to seek shelter under him. A sage is but a man who looks for this sanctuary. He is an affectionate devotee as Arjun is. So it is vital to seek refuge in a

sage who is aware of the essence, for only he can provide the requisite impulse.

This chapter also sheds light on the nature of renunciation. The resigning, of all one has, is renunciation. Mere putting on of a certain kind of attire is not renunciation. Absorption in the ordained deed, while leading a life of seclusion, with a due appraisal of one's own strength or with a sense of self-surrender, is inescapable. Renunciation is the name of the abandonment of all action along with consummation, and so but a synonym for the final deliverance. That absolution is the crowning point of renunciation.

Thus concludes the Eighteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled : "**Sanyas Yog**" or "**The Yog of Renunciation''**.

Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand's exposition of the Eighteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in **"Yatharth Geeta".**

**|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||**

# YATHARTH GEETA

## SUMMARY

Interpreters usually endeavour to hit upon somthing novel. But truth is, of course, truth. It is neither ever new, nor does it ever grow old. Fresh issues that find a place in newspaper columns are but temporal events that emerge one day and disappear on the next. But since truth is immutable and permanent, it is always what it is. If one ventures forth to change or modify it, he has evidently not known truth. So all sages who have trodden the path of seeking and reached the supreme goal cannot but proclaim the same truth. So they do not sow dissension between man and man. One who attempts to do so is evidently ignorant of truth. What Krishn has revealed in the Geeta is the same as sages coming earlier than him had known and which sages to come hereafter shall speak of if they have known it.

**SAGES** pave and widen the felicitous path by opposing misconceptions and blind customs that but seem like truth and proliferate in its garb. This has been a vital need since the beginning, for many divergent ways come into being with the passage of time. So deceptively like truth do they appear that it is almost impossible to distinguish them from reality and assert that it is so. But since realized sages dwell in the essence, they can recognize ways that are at variance with it. They are capable of representing truth in a definitive form and prompting other men to its pursuit. This is what all seerprophets-Ram, Mahabir, Buddh, Jesus, and Muhammad-have done. And so it was with the more recent Tulsidas, Kabir, and Guru Nanak. Deplorably, however, after a sage has departed from the world, instead of following the path shown by him, his

followers gradually begin to revere and worship such physical objects as the places of his birth and death or the spots he had frequented during his life. In other words, they proceed to idolize the great Soul. Their memory of the sage is indeed sharp and strong at the beginning, but it gets blurred with time, and men come increasingly under the sway of misguided and false notions that finally crystallize into stupid, irrational practices.

Many such misguided customs, claiming to represent truth, had flourished in Yogeshwar Krishn's time, too. Being a realized sage who had perceived the highest spiritual reality, he opposed these false creeds and thus fulfilled his given obligation of bringing men back to the path of righteousness. Doesn't he tell Arjun in the sixteenth verse of Chapter 2 that "The unreal has no being and the real has no non-being; and the truth about both has also been seen by men who know the reality?" The unreal has no existence while, on the other hand, the real is never non-existent. Krishn also admits at the same time that he is not saying this as an incarnation of God: he is only saying what has also been affirmed by other sages who realized the truth of the Soul's identity with the all-pervading Supreme Spirit. His account of the human body as a sphere of action (kshetr) and of the one who grows spiritually dexterous by subduing it (kshetragya) is akin to what has also often been professed by other great men of discernment. Elucidating the essence of relinquishment and renunciation in Chapter 18, Krishn singles out one of the four differing creeds prevailing at his time and defends it.

Since truth is one, eternal, and changeless, as a corollary **ALL SAGES ARE ONE**. Krishn discloses to Arjun in Chapter 4 that it was he who had taught the eternal yog to Vivaswat, the Sun-god. But how are we-like Arjun-to lend credence to this assertion? Vivaswat was born in the distant, obscure past, whereas Krishn has had a recent birth-in a remembered time. Krishn resolves Arjun's doubt by telling him that they

have all undergone numerous births. But while men like Arjun, who have not yet completed their journey of quest, are unaware of their previous births, Krishn who has beheld his Self and realized the unmanifest God remembers them well. That is why he is a Yogeshwar! The state he has attained to is therefore ineffable and imperishable. Whenever the spiritual exercise that unites one with God was set in motion, it was initiated by some enlightened saint- be he a Ram or a Zarathustra. The verities that Krishn enunciates in the Geeta have also characterized the teaching of seers like Jesus, Muhammad, and Guru Nanak in later times.

So all sages belong to one fraternity. They all converge at the same point through their perception of the reality of God. The ultimate goal they arrive at is the same. There are many who venture along the path of realization, but the ultimate bliss they attain to is the same if the process of their worship is successfully accomplished. After realization they exist as pure, immaculate Souls, while their bodies are turned into mere dwellings. Whoever belonging to this state has enlightened mankind is a Yogeshwar, a Lord of Yog (union).

Like all others a sage has to be born somewhere. But whether such an individual is born in the East or West, among whatever race or colour, among followers of some existing creed or barbarous tribes, or among the poor or rich, the sage is unshackled by the established traditions of the people among whom he or she is born. A sage rather holds God as his supreme goal, sets upon the way that leads towards him, and ultimately becomes what that Supreme Being is. So there can be no distinctions of caste, class, colour or wealth in the teachings of the realized sage. A sage loses right even of the physical difference of the sexes, male and female. For enlightened persons as it is pointed out in the sixteenth verse of Chapter 15, there are only two kinds of beings in all the world, the mortal and the immortal. Whereas the bodies of all beings are destructible, their Souls are imperishable.

So it is regrettable that disciples of sages, coming in later times, devise their own peculiar, narrow-minded creeds and dogmas. Whereas the followers of one of these sages name themselves Jews, others call themselves Christians or Muslims or Hindus. A sage is quite unconcerned with such denominations and barriers, for such a person is above community and caste. He or she is but a seer-a Soul of enlightenment and realization, and any attempt to mix up with a social setup is an error.

No sage-teacher is, therefore, such an individual to be castigated or spoken ill of, irrespective of among whom they are born or of any sectarian bias by which such a sage is venerated by members of a certain creed. The realized sage is impartial and so by denigrating such a person we but sap the omniscient God who dwells within us, alienate ourselves from him, and do injury to the Self. An accomplished. sage is thus the one earnest benefactor we have in the world. Possessed of knowledge and discernment, the sage alone can bestow the highest good on us. So it is our primary duty to cultivate and cherish goodwill for him or her and we only dupe ourselves if we deprive ourselves of this feeling of friendliness and reverence.

A sore, long-standing problem of India, **PROSELYTIZATION** conversion from one religious creed to another-has engendered sentiments so irrational and violent that today they are threatening the very existence of the country. That makes it necessary that we approach the problem objectively and with an open mind, so that we can have a clear grasp of its genesis and implications. The questions that need to be answered are: Who is to blame for our mass conversions? In what way have the proselytizers been better or worse than the people they have converted? Since God is one and the truth, dharm is also one and universal, is it really possible for men to change from one faith to

another? Do they have a different God by just changing their name and way. of life?

That proselytization has so grievously affected the one country that may rightfully boast of having been the cradle of the eternal truth- the Sanatan Dharm- is a disgrace for which we all have to hang our heads in shame. But this is not enough and we should give careful thought to the circumstances that have brought India to her sorry state of today.

Delusions had grown so rank at the time of Muslim invasions in the Middle Ages that Hindus really came to believe they would lose their dharm if they but ate a handful of rice or drank a mouthful of water from the hands of an alien. Convinced that they had been stripped of their dharm, thousands of Hindus took their own life. They knew well how to die for their dharrn, but they had no awareness at all of what that dharm was. There was no consciousness whatsoever of how the eternal, imperishable Soul, unsullied by any material object, could die by a mere touch. Even physical bodies are killed by some weapon or the other, but Hindus were bereft of their dharm by mere touch. However, it was certainly not dharm that was destroyed. What really met with destruction was just a body of misconceptions. Mugisuddin, the kaji of Bayana, promulgated a law during the reign of Feroze Tughlaq that Muslims had the right to spit into a Hindu's mouth because the Hindu had no faith of his own and he would be redeemed by a Muslim's spittle. Mugisuddin was not really unjust in doing so. If spitting into a mouth could convert only one Hindu to Islam, spitting into wells converted thousands. The teal tyrant of the age thus was not the alien invader, but the Hindu society itself.

Have they who have been converted, we may ask, gained dharm? Conversion from one way of life to another is not dharm. Moreover, the proselytizers, too, were by no means men of dharm. At

heart the proselytizers were even worse victims of certain misconceptions. And it was such a pity that ignorant Hindus fell unheeding into the pitfalls of these delusions. In order to reform backward and ignorant tribes, Muhammad had laid down a framework of social order to regulate marriage, divorce, inheritance, borrowing and lending, usury, evidence, oath-taking, atonement, occupation and living, and conduct. He had also forbidden idolatory, adultery and fornication, stealing, intoxicants, gambling, and certain kinds of improper marriages. But instead of being dharm, all these measures were only an attempt at some sort of social organization by which the prophet had endeavoured to divert the lust-ridden society of his time towards his own teachings.

But, while this aspect of Muhammad's teachings has always been given prominence, little thought is given to his concept of dharm. He has laid it down that Allah holds to account the man, even a single breath. of whose is bereft of consciousness of the Almighty, just as he condemns a sinner for his iniquities, and the punishment for which is perpetual damnation. How many of us can sincerely claim that we have lived according to this ideal? Muhammad provided that the man who harms none, not even beasts, is enabled to hear the voice of God. This was said for all places and times. But the Prophet's followers have changed the import of the decree altogether by assigning a unique position to the Grand Mosque at Mecca: it is here that one must not pluck a blade of grass, nor slaughter a beast, nor cause harm to anyone. Thus Muslims too have been caught in traps of their own making and it is more often than not forgotten that the Grand Mosque is but a monument to cherish and perpetuate the Prophet's sacred memory.

Among others, the true import of Islam was understood by Tabrej, by Mansour, by Iqbal. But they were all victimized and persecuted by religious fanatics and bigots. And so was Socrates poisoned, allegedly for conspiring to convert people to atheism. Since

Jesus toiled even on the Sabbath and conferred vision on the blind, the same charge was levelled against him and he was crucified. In India even today, people, who earn their subsistence from a place of worship, a religious order or sect, or from a seat of pilgrimage, raise a great. hue and cry that faith is imperilled whenever a sage speaks of reality. They can only oppose truth and ,do nothing else, because they regard its propagation as a threat to their livelihood. Like the persecutors of Socrates and Jesus, such so called religious people have also either forgotten or deliberately turned a blind eye to why a certain sacred memory had been preserved in a monument in the remote past.

Sages are familiar with all kinds of conduct-extemal and internal, practical and spiritual, and also of worldly conduct and the ideal conduct enjoined by scriptures, for without such comprehensive knowledge they cannot frame laws to regulate social life and behaviour and a decorous order. Vashisth, Shukrachary, Yogeshwar Krishn himself, Mahatma Buddh, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Sant Ramdas, Dayanand, and hundreds of other sages like them have done the same. But their social, worldly provisions are at best of a temporal nature. Bestowing material benefits on society is not a question of truth (Sanatan Dharm) because physical problems are here today and gone tomorrow. Though undoubtedly useful in a given time and situation, worldly dispensations by sages are also, therefore, valid only for a limited period and as such they cannot be accepted as a timeless order.

Sages do operate as **LAW-GIVERS** and they have rightly exerted themselves for the eradication of social evils. The undertaking of worship of the Supreme Spirit in a spirit of discernment and renunciation may not be possible if these evils are not eliminated. Apart from this, certain "allurements" need to be provided in order to divert men, who are too engrossed in the world, to the state in which they can secure an awareness of truth. But the social order that sages have envisaged to

achieve this and the words they have employed to formulate this order do not constitute dharm. They only cater to people's needs for a century or two and are cited as precedents for a few centuries more, but they are certainly rendered lifeless with the emergence of fresh exigencies over the span of a millennium or at most two. The sword was an essential feature of the martial organization laid down by Guru Gobind Singh for the Sikhs. But what is the validity of carrying a sword in the changed circumstances of today? Jesus rode asses and he forbade his disciples to steal asses. But whatever he said of these simple creatures has been rendered irrelevant today because people around the world now rarely use asses as a means of conveyance. In the same way Yogeshwar Krishn attempted to impose a certain order on contemporary society according to the needs of the time, accounts of which are found in such works as the Mahabharat and the Bhagwat. Along with this, however, these works also portray the ultimate reality-the spiritual essence-from time to time. And we shall certainly fail to comprehend both the social aspect and the truth if we mix up the ordinance for the attainment of final liberation with the social provisions. Followers are sadly drawn more by the social, worldly provisions which they hasten to adopt not only as they are but in a much overdone form, and are ever ready to quote sages in defence of the social norms they have accepted. And they do not realize that in doing all this they are in fact only distorting the righteous and true action that realized sages have recommended, and turning it into so many forms of selfdeception. Prejudices-born out of ignorance-have grown and persisted in respect of all holy books, be it the Ved, the Ramayan, the Mahabharat, the Bible, or the Koran.

The primary concern of sages is **KSHETR**-the sphere of internal action. It is often advanced that there are two spheres of action, external and internal. But this is not true for a sage. He speaks of only one sphere, although listeners may interpret him differently according to their

own individual predilections. It is thus that a single pronouncement is assigned various implications. But the Soul that has attained to Krishn's state by gradually making his way on the path of worship beholds what was perceived by the Lord himself. He alone recognizes the signs provided in the Geeta and know what really the Yogeshwar intended to say.

Not even one verse in the whole song of revelation is concerned with the phenomena of external life. We all know what to eat and how to dress ourselves. Dictated by time, place, and circumstance, variations in mode of living, assumptions, and considerations that regulate social behaviour are a gift from nature. So what provisions could Krishn make for them? If some societies adopt polygamy because their girls outnumber boys, others accept polyandry because there are fewer girls. What laws could Krishn formulate for this? Some underpopulated nations exhort their people to have as many children as they can and reward them for this. In the Vedic Age in India it was prescribed that a couple have at least ten children. But in the changed conditions of today the ideal is one child or, at the most, two. The best thing, of course, is to have no child at all. The less children, the fewer the problems of the country will be in this age of overpopulation crisis. Now, what rules could Krishn lay down for this?

It is not that the Geeta is quite unconcerned with **MATERIAL LIFE AND PROSPERITY**. Krishn promises in verses 20-22 of Chapter 9: “Men who do the pious deeds enjoined by the three Ved, who have tasted nectar and freed themselves from sin, and who wish for heavenly existence through worshipping me by yagya, go to heaven and enjoy godly pleasures for their virtuous acts.” It is said that God grants what the worshippers desire. After enjoying the joys of heaven, however, they have to return to the mortal world-the world that is governed by the three properties. But since they abide in God, the ultimate bliss, and are

protected by him, they are never destroyed. It is also God who gradually liberates them by fulfilling their yearning for enjoyment and thus setting them on to the way that leads to the highest good.

But material prosperity is only an incidental concern of the Geeta and it is in this respect that it is different from **THE VED**. There are numerous allusions to them in the Geeta, but the sacred books of the Ved are altogether only milestones. The seeker has no use for them after he has reached his destination. So Arjun is prompted, in the forty-fifth verse of Chapter 2, that since all the books of the Ved provide illumination only within the limits of the three properties of nature, he should rise above them, liberate himself from the incongruities of joy and grief, rest on that which is constant, and be equally indifferent towards the acquisition of what he does not have and the protection of what he has, so as to devote himself intently to the Self within. In the very next verse it is added that the worshipper has no need for the Ved after final liberation just as a man has no need for a measly pond when there is the infinite ocean all around him. There is also the suggestion here that the one who goes beyond the Ved, by knowing God, is a Brahmin. So, although the usefulness of the Ved does come' to an end for worshippers of the Brahmin class, there is no doubt about their utility for others. Krishn proclaims in the twentyeighth verse of Chapter 8 that after having secured knowledge of the essence of God, the yogi goes beyond the rewards of Vedic scriptural study, sacrificial rites, penance, and charity, and thus attains to absolution. That also means that the Vedic scriptures endure and that performance of the ordained yagya is incomplete so long as the ultimate state has not been achieved. As it is pointed out in Chapter 15, he who knows God, the root of the Ashwath tree that the world is,is a knower of the Ved. That knowledge, however, can be had only by sitting devotedly at the feet of a noble sage-teacher. Rather than a book or seat of learning, the mode of worship that this mentor enjoins

is the source-the spring-of that knowledge, although it cannot be denied that holy books and centres of formal instruction are intended to steer one in the same direction.

According to the Geeta there is only **ONE GOD**. The whole pantheon of lesser gods and goddesses worshipped by Hindus is a stark reminder of how the spirit of dharm gets ignored and the letter predominates, giving rise to countless perversions. Since the ordained task is an internal process of the mind and senses, how fitting is it to build external places of worship such as temples and mosques, and to adore idols of symbolic representations of gods and goddesses? Ideally Hindus are followers of the eternal truths of Sanatan Dharm- values and virtues that awaken the immutable, eternal God within man's heart and thus enable him to realize his Self. Pursuing and delving deep into eternal truths, their forebears had disseminated their insights add revelations all over the world. Irrespective of the part of the earth he hails from, one who treads the path of reality is essentially a believer in the eternal truth, Sanatan Dharm. Overridden by desire, however, Hindus have gradually lost sight of reality and become victims of a host of misconceptions. Krishn emphatically warns Arjun that there are no entities like gods. Whatever be the power a man devotes himself to, it is God who stands behind the object of his adoration to reward him. It is God who sustains all worship, for he is all-pervading. Truly, therefore, the worship of other gods is unlawful and its fruits are perishable. Only those ignorant men whose minds have been held to ransom by desire worship other gods and their objects of worship vary according to their native inclinations. While gods are the object of adoration by good and virtuous men, demons and yaksh are worshipped by those who are given to passion and moral blindness, ghosts and spirits are venerated by men of ignorance. Many of these worshippers even subject themselves to severe and grievous austerities. But, as Krishn enlightens Arjun, all such

worshippers of improper objects impair not only. their physical beings but also God who dwells within them. Such worshippers should, therefore, be deemed as surely possessed of an unrighteous, evil disposition. Since God abides in the hearts of all beings, it is binding on everyone that he takes refuge in him alone. The true place of worship is, therefore, not external but within the realm of heart. Yet people are drawn towards and worship even such unworthy objects as rock, water, mere structures of brick and mortar, and a host of inferior divinities. To these objects they also sometimes add an idol of Krishn.

What an irony that even followers of Buddhism, who lay such great stress on Krishn's teachings, have sculpted images of their mentor Buddh who had all his life condemned idolatory. They have forgotten the words spoken by their noble teacher to his beloved pupil Anand: "Waste not your time on the worship of one who is in the state of being."

This is not to insist, however, that places and objects of divine adoration like temples, mosques, churches, seats of pilgrimage, idols, and monuments have no value whatsoever. Most significantly they keep alive memories of bygone seers so that people may constantly remember their ideals and achievements. Among these sages there have been women as well as men. Sita, Janak's daughter, had been a Brahmin girl in her previous life. At her father's prompting, she had subjected herself to rigorous penance, but success had yet eluded her. In her next life, however, she was rewarded when she achieved union with Ram and came to be revered as immaculate (like God himself) and immortal, and as maya-God's "divine consort". Meera had a royal birth, but there was an awakening of devotion to God in her heart, too. Struggling with many hurdles she at last emerged triumphant. Shrines and monuments have been erected to commemorate her, so that the community may imbibe spiritual life from her pious example. Be it Meera or Sita, or any other visionary who has sought for and perceived reality,

each of them is an ideal for us and we should follow in their footsteps. But what greater folly can be there than assuming that we have discharged our moral obligation by merely offering flowers and applying sandal paste to these exemplars?

If we but look at some relic of one whom we regard as an ideal, we are overwhelmed by the sentiment of loving devotion. This is as it should be, for it is only by the inspiration provided by him and by his guidance that we can move ahead on our spiritual journey. It should be our purpose to advance step by step towards the point where we become what our ideal is. This is true worship. However, although it is right that we do not in any way slight our ideals, we shall be guilty of straying from our goal and be wide off our mark if we complacently believe that offering of leaves and flowers is all that is needed for achievement of the propitious end.

As for gaining wisdom from our ideals and acting upon it, whatever we call them-a hermitage, monastery, temple, mosque, church, math, vihar or gurudwara, each one of them does have its merit provided it is marked by genuine spiritual concern. Whose memory or image is consecrated in these monuments? What was his accomplishment? What penances did he go through for it? How did he make his attainment? It is to learn the answers to these questions that we should go to centres of worship and pilgrimage. But these centres are profitless if they cannot enlighten us by example on the steps by which some accomplished Soul had finally reached his goal. They are also of no value if they cannot present us with a setup that is truly propitious. In that case all they can offer us is some blind, established creed or practice. If it is so, we doubtlessly cause ourselves harm by frequenting them. These centres of worship had originally come up to obviate the arduous necessity of individuals going from one home to another for instruction and preaching, and to replace it with collective religious discourse. But in the course of

time idolatory and irrational adherence to entrenched conventions supplanted dharm and gave rise to innumerable misguided notions.

The syllable **OM** is to Hindus the symbol of the one God that the Geeta illuminates. OM, also called pranav-the word or sound, expresses the Supreme Being. In the Vedic literature it is said th.at the past, present, and future are all nothing but OM.' The syllable represents the omnipresent, omnipotent, changeless God. From OM are born all that is propitious, all faiths, all celestial b.eings, all the Ved, all yagya, all utterances, all rewards, and all that is inanimate or animate. Krishn tells Arjun in the eighth verse of Chapter 8: "I am ... the sacred syllable OM." In the following chapter it is said: "He who departs from the body intoning OM, God in word, and remembering me, attains to salvation." (Verse 13). And he, too, Krishn affirms in the seventeenth verse of Chapter 9, is "the bearer and preserver of the whole world as also the giver of rewards for action; father, mother, and also the grandsire; the sacred, imperishable OM who is worthy of being known; and all Ved- Rig, Sam, and Yajur." In Chapter 1 0 he calls himself "OM among words" and "the vowel akar among the letters of the alphabet"the first sound of the sacred OM. (verses 25 and 33). The fwentythird verse of Chapter 17 declares that "OM, tat, and sat are three epithets used for the Supreme Being from whom at the outset there came forth Brahmin, the Ved, and yagya." And in the very next verse it is added: "It is hence that the deeds of yagya, charity, and of penance, as ordained by scripture, are always initiated by the devotees of Ved with a resonant utterance of the syllable OM." Krishn's final verdict is that recitation of OM is a prime necessity and that its proper mode has to be learnt by sitting devotedly at the feet of some accomplished sage.

Krishn is an incarnation, but he is also a sage-a noble teacher-preceptor-who is the **GIVER OF YOG**. As we have just seen, according to the Yogeshwar, the knowledge of the way that leads to ultimate good,

the means of embarking on it, and of its attainment, is derived from a noble mentor. Even roaming about from one holy place to another or similar other strenuous exertions cannot bring this knowledge within our reach in the absence of a teacher who can impart it to us. In the thirtyfourth verse of Chapter 4, Arjun is advised to obtain this knowledge from sages through reverence, inquiry and guileless solicitation, for only these wise Souls who are aware of the reality can initiate him into it. Close proximity to an accomplished sage, asking him sincere questions, and rendering of humble service to him constitute the means of realization. Only by pursuing this course can Arjun finally bring his spiritual quest to fruition. The vital importance of an accomplished teacherpreceptor is again emphatically stated in Chapter 18: " Whereas the way of securing knowledge, the worthwhile knowledge, and the knower constitute the threefold inspiration to action, the doer, the agents, and the deed itself are the threefold constituents of action." According to Krishn's injunction, therefore, an enlightened sage, rather than books, is the primary medium by which action is accomplished. A book only offers a formula and no illness is healed by memorizing the prescription: the more important thing is its application-its practice.

Much has been said about delusions and we are confronted by them, too, in regard to **ACTION**. The Geeta sheds light on how these misconceptions come into being. Krishn tells Arjun in the thirty-ninth verse of Chapter 2 that both the Way of Knowledge and Discernment and the Way of Selfless Action can effectively sever the fetters of action as well as of its consequence. Practising them in even small measures successfully liberates one from the terror of birth and death. In both the ways the resolute deed is one, the mind is one, and the direction is also one. But ignorant minds are riddled with endless contradictions. In the guise of accomplishing action they invent numerous deeds, rites, and ceremonies. But these are not true action and Arjun is exhorted to

undertake only the action that is ordained. This action is an appointed course and it is that which brings to an end the body which has been journeying through one birth to another since time immemorial. This journey can by no means be said to have terminated if the Soul has to undergo yet another birth.

The appointed action is only one, the action that we call worship or meditation. But there are two ways of approaching it : the **WAY OF KNOWLEDGE** and the **WAY OF SELFLESS ACTION**. Engaging in the deed with a proper evaluation of one's ability, as well as of the profit and loss involved in the enterprise, is the Way of Knowledge. The one who traverses this path is conscious of what he is today, what change there is going to be in his role on the next day, and that he will ultimately reach the aspired-for goal. Since he proceeds with a due awareness and understanding of his situation, this wayfarer is called a rover over the Way of Knowledge. But the man who steps on the Way of Selfless Action commences his undertaking with a total reliance on the adored teacher. This seeker leaves the questions of profit and loss to his mentor's discretion. So this is also the Way of Devotion. What is worth noting, however, is that the initial impulse in both cases comes from a noble teacher. Enlightened by the same sage, while one of the pupils embarks on the prescribed task with self-reliance, the other does it by surrendering himself to the mercy of his teacher. So it is that Yogeshwar Krishn tells Arjun that the ultimate essence that is secured by the Way of Knowledge is also achieved by the Way of Selfless Action. The seeker who perceives the two as identical is the one who knows reality. The seer who declares both actions as one is Krishn and the action, too, in both cases is one. Treaders on both paths have to relinquish desire and the outcome of the two disciplines is also one. Only the attitudes with which this action is undertaken are two.

This one action-the ordained action-is **YAGYA**. Krishn has explicitly told Arjun in the ninth verse of Chapter 3: "Since the conduct of yagya is the only action and all other business in which people are engaged are only forms of worldly bondage, O son of Kunti, be unattached and do your duty to God well." True action is that which frees the Self from shackles of the world. But what precisely is this deed, the undertaking of yagya, which effects the accomplishment of action? In Chapter 4, Krishn has elucidated yagya in more than a dozen ways which are collectively but a portrayal of the mode that provides access to the Supreme Being. In fact, all the different forms of yagya are internal processes of contemplation: forms of worship that render God manifest and known. Yagya is thus the special, ordained means by which a worshipper traverses the path that leads to God. The means by which this appointed task is accomplished-regulation and serenity of breath, meditation, reflection, and restraint of the senses-constitute action. Krishn has also made it clear that yagya has nothing to do with nonspiritual matters and that the yagya which is performed by mean,s of material objects is indeed contemptible. It is so even if we offer sacrifices worth millions. True yagya is performed by internal operations of the mind and senses. Knowledge is the consciousness of the immortal essence that ensues from yayga at its successful completion. Yogi who are blessed with this transcendental awareness become one with God. And once the goal that had to be achieved is reached, there is no need for any further action by the liberated Soul, for all action merges into the knowledge that is gained from direct perception of the ultimate essence. The liberation of the Soul is thus also liberation from action.

The Geeta speaks of no action other than this appointed action-the yagya that achieves God-realization. This has been repeatedly emphasized by Krishn. It is yagya which he has named the "ordained task"-the deed that is worth doing-in the opening verse of Chapter 6. It is

further pointed out in Chapter 16 that the undertaking of yagya commences in the real sense only after lust, anger and greed have been completely forsaken (verse 21). The more a man is absorbed in worldly business, the more tempting do desire, anger, and greed appear to him. In Chapters 17 and 18, too, while dwelling upon the task that is appointed, worthy and righteous, Krishn has affirmed over and over that this one ordained action is the most propitious.

Unfortunately, however, in spite of Krishn's repeated warning we persist in assuming that whatever we do in the world is "action." And that there is no need for any relinquishment. All that is needed for our deeds to be selfless is that we should not aspire after fruits of labour. We erroneously persuade overselves that the Way of Action is accomplished by just our undertaking a task with a sense of obligation, or that the Way of Renunciation is achieved by a mere surrender of whatever we do to God. Similarly, no sooner is the question of yagya broached than we fabricate the five "great sacrifices" such as offering oblations to all beings (bhoot yagya) or water libations to departed ancestors, or sacrifices to fire to appease superior gods like Vishnu, and promptly rush to perform them loudly chanting "swaha:' Had Krishna not made a specific pronouncement in regard to yagya, we should have been at liberty to follow the dictates of our will. But it is a demand of wisdom that we obey what is laid down in scripture. Yet we obstinately refuse to act upon Krishn's precepts because of the sinful legacy of numerous misguided customs and creeds as well as modes of worship that we have inherited and which bind our minds in chains of ignorance. We can run away from material possessions, but the preconceptions that lurk in our minds and hearts pursue us wherever we go. And if we ever deign to abide by Krishn's teachings, we cannot help distorting them into the shape of our deluded, pre-conceived notions. It is evident that yagya necessarily entails **RENUNCIATION**. So, naturally we have the question if there is

any stage before the ultimate realization at which one may forsake this action in the name of renunciation. It appears from the nature of Krishn's argument on the question that at his time, too, there existed a sect, the members of which boasted of being renunciates because they did not kindle fire and had even given up meditation. As against this, Krishn has asserted that there is no provision for abandonment of the ordained action on either the Way of Knowledge or the Way of Devotion. The enjoined task has to be set upon. This is an inescapable necessity. By constant and resolute practice the act of worship is progressively refined and finally rendered so subtle that will and desire are completely subdued and stilled. True renunciation is only this total cessation of will and desire, and there is no sacrifice earlier than this accomplishment that could be called renunciation. In chapter after chapter (2, 3, 5, 6), and specially in the final chapter, it is underlined that no man becomes a yogi-a selfdenier-by just not lighting fire or by relinquishment of action.

If we but understand the nature of yagya and action, we will also easily comprehend the other issues raised in the Geeta, the issues of **WAR**, of the four part organization of action, of varnsankar, and of the Way of Knowledge as well as the Yog' of Action. That means the entire message of the Geeta. Arjun did not wish to fight. He cast away his bow and sat down despondently in the rear of his chariot. By imparting the knowledge of action to him, then, Krishn not only convinced him of its validity but also induced him to take up his appointed task. Since Arjun is exhorted to take up arms and fight in almost a score of verses, doubtlessly there was a war. But there is not a single verse in the whole of the Geeta which approves of physical slaughter and bloodshed. This is clearly seen from Chapters 2, 3, 11, 15, and 18, because the action that is stipulated in all of them without exception is the deed that is ordained and performed through solitary meditation, and in which the mind is reined in from all objects other than the cherished goal. If such is

the nature of action envisioned in the Geeta, the question of physical warfare simply does not arise. If the propitious way revealed by the Geeta is only for those who wish to fight wars, we had better keep it aside. In fact, Arjun's predicament is' one that confronts all of us. His grief and indecision were there in the historical past and they are with us even today. When we try to restrain our minds and concentrate with all our being, we are shaken by such infirmities as desire, anger, infatuation, and disenchantment. To fight these maladies and destroy them is war. Wars have been and are being fought in the world, but the peace resulting from them is incidental and transitory. True and lasting peace is won only when the Self has attained the state of immortality.

This is the only peace after which there is no disquiet, and it can be achieved only by accomplishing the ordained action. It is this action, rather than mankind, that Yogeshwar Krishn has divided into far **VARN** or classes. A worshipper with inadequate knowledge is at the Shudr stage. So it is incumbent on him to begin his quest with rendering of service as required by his native ability, for thus alone can the proficiencies of the Vaishya, Kshatriya, and Brahmin classes be gradually inculcated in him. Thus only will he be enabled to ascend step by step. At the other end, the Brahmin too is flawed because he is yet distant from God. And, after he has merged with that Supreme Being, he ceases to be a Brahmin. "Varn" denotes "form." A man's form is not his body but his inborn disposition. Krishn tells Arjun in the third verse of Chapter 17 : "Since the faith of all men, O Bharat, is according to their inherent propensity and man is essentially reverent, he is what his faith is:' Every man's character is moulded by his faith and the faith is according to his dominant property. Yarn is thus a scale, a yardstick, to measure one's capacity for action. But with the passing of time we either grew oblivious of or discarded the appointed action, began to decide social status by heredity-thus treating varn as caste, and laid down rigid

occupations and modes of living for different men. This is social classification, whereas the classification made in the Geeta is spiritual. Moreover, they who have thus twisted the meaning of varn have also distorted the implications of action so as to protect their hollow social standing and economic privileges. With the passage of time, thus, varn came to be determined by birth alone. But the Geeta makes no such provision. Krishn says that he was the creator of the fourfold varn. Are we to assume from this that there was creation within the boundaries of India alone, for castes such as ours cannot be found anywhere else in the world? The number of our castes and subcastes is beyond counting. Does this mean that Krishn had divided men into classes? The definitive answer to this is found in the thirteenth verse of Chapter 4, where, he declares: "I have created the four classes (varn) according to innate properties and action." So he has classified action, not men, on the basis of inherent properties. The meaning of varn will be understood without difficulty if we have grasped the significance of action, and the import of varnsankar will be clear if we have comprehended what varn is.

One who deviates from the way of ordained action is **VARNSANKAR**. The true varn of the Self is God himself. So to stray from the path that takes the Self to God and to be lost in the wilderness of nature is to be varnsankar. Krishn has revealed that no one can attain to that Supreme Spirit without setting upon the way of action. Sages of accomplishment who are emancipated neither gain from undertaking action nor lose by forsaking it. And yet they engage in action for the good of mankind. Like these sages, there is nothing that Krishn has not achieved, but he yet continues to labour diligently for the sake of men who lag behind. If he does not perform his given task well and earnestly, the world will perish and all men will be varnsankar ( 3:22-24). Illegitimate children are said to be born when women turn adulterous, but Krishn affirms that all mankind is under the threat of falling into the

varnsankar state if the sages who dwell in God refrain from fulfilling their obligation. If these sages desist from the performance of their assigned task, the unaccomplished will imitate them, discontinue worship, and for ever wander in the maze of nature. They will thus become varnsankar, for the immaculate God and the state of actionlessness can be achieved only by an undertaking of the ordained action.

Along with his fear of destruction of families in the impending war and the consequent birth of varnsankar (illegitimate) children, Arjun also gives vent to his apprehension that, deprived of **OBSEQUIAL OFFERINGS**, the departed Souls of ancestors will fall from heaven. Thereupon Yogeshwar Krishn asks him how such a delusion has come over him. Pronouncing that obsequial offerings are but an instance of spiritual ignorance, the Lord points out that the Soul changes from a tattered, ravaged body to a new one just as a man discards worn out clothes to put on a new apparel. Since the physical body is mere clothing and, rather than dying, the Soul just changes from one apparel to another, who is it that we endeavour to appease and sustain by making all these obsequial offerings? That explains why Krishn declares the practice an example of ignorance. Stressing the same again, he adds in the seventh verse of Chapter 15 : "The immortal Soul in the body is a part of mine and it is he who draws the five senses and the sixth-the mind-that dwell in nature:' The Soul carries along the properties and mode of the mind and five senses of the body from which he departs and takes them into his new body. When the next body, equipped with all the means of physical enjoyment, is immediately assured to the Soul, to whom do we offer the obsequial flour-cakes and libations?

As the Soul discards his old body, he at once assumes another, and there is no interruption between the two events. Imagining, therefore, that the Souls of our deceased ancestors of a thousand or more generations are lying somewhere waiting to be fed and offered

drinks by their living descendants, as well as shedding tears of sorrow over the fancied fall of these Souls from their non-existent heavenly abode, cannot but be an instance of ignorance.

Arjun's anxieties over varnsankar and the fall of the Souls of the departed forbearers from their celestial home naturally draws one's attention to the questions of **SIN** and **PIETY**. Numerous misconceptions also prevail in regard to what is virtuous and what is impious: the righteous and the unrighteous. According to Yogeshwar Krishn, the man who is afflicted with the maladies of lust and anger that arise from the property of spiritual ignorance, and whose hunger for carnal enjoyment is insatiable, is the most abject sinner. In other words, covetousness is the chief among all sins. Lust and desire, dwelling in the senses, mind and intellect, are the fountainhead of sin. No amount of washing the body can make us clean if iniquity lurks within the mind.

Declaring that the mind and senses are purged by constant remembrance and recitation of the name, by steady meditation, and by resigning oneself as well as rendering ,earnest service to some realized, accomplished sage who has grasped the essence, Krishn urges Arjun, in the thirty-fourth verse of Chapter 4, to undertake these deeds. Arjun is exhorted to obtain the knowledge, into which all action is at last merged, from sages through reverence, inquiry, and innocent solicitation. This knowledge-awareness of the highest spiritual truth-annihilates all sin.

The same idea is stated differently in Chapter 13 when Arjun is told that whereas wise men who partake of the food ensuing from yagya are liberated from all sin, the impious who only covet gratification of physical desires subsist on nothing but sin. Yagya is, as we have seen, a certain process of meditation by which all influences and impressions of the world-animate as well as inanimate-stored in the mind are reduced to nothing. God is the only remnant that is left behind. So, while sin is that which engenders bodies, acts of piety enable a man to realize the

indestructible, eternal essence after which the Soul is freed from the compulsion of assuming yet another body.

Rid of wicked and conflicting passions, the doers of virtuous action which brings the cycle of birth and death to an end worship and adore the Supreme Spirit with an avowed resolve. Krishn tells Arjun in the twentyninth verse of Chapter 7 : "They who are aware of God, the identity of the Supreme Spirit and the individual Soul, and of all action, find shelter under me and strive for liberation from the cycle of birth and death:' They who know Krishn as well as they know the Supreme Being who animates all beings, all divinities, and yagya, and whose minds are absorbed in him, come to know the God in Krishn and are united with him forever. Piety is, therefore, that which induces the Self to rise above birth and death and all evils so as to know the eternal, immutable reality and forever dwell in it. By the same logic, that deed is sinful which constrains the Self to go round and round within the boundaries of mortality, and of grief and spiritual sickness.

It is said again in Chapter 10 that the wise man, who knows Krishn's essence as the birthless, eternal, and Supreme God of the entire world, is freed from all sins. It is only the direct perception of God, as we have been enlightened, that liberates the Soul from sin.

In brief, therefore, whereas that which effects repeated birth and death is sin, the deed that prompts one towards God and begets the ultimate repose is piety. While merits such as truthfulness, relying upon the produce of one's own labour, regarding women with the loving reverence that is felt for one's own mother, and integrity are also important concomitants of virtue, true piety is of course the realization of God. The man who offends against faith in God is a sinner.

In the popular imagination sin and **HELL** always go together. Now, what is this hell? It has been described variously as bottomless pit, as inferno, and as underworld. Giving an account of the property of

ignorance, Krishn has pointed out in Chapter 16 that, misguided in numerous ways, enmeshed in the webs of attachment, and inordinately fond of sensual pleasure, men fall into the most defiled hell. Light is shed on the nature of this hell in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter when Krishn says: "I for ever condemn these abhorring, sinful, and cruel men, the most abject among mankind, to inferior births." ignorant and wicked men who entertain a feeling of hostility against God are perpetually condemned to repeated birth in lower forms of life. As for what takes one to this hell, it is declared in the same chapter that lust, anger, and greed, all destructive of sanctity of the Self, are the three gateways to hell. It is these maladies, more than any others, that constitute the devilish hoard. So hell, as visualized in the Geeta, is degradation to recurrent birth in base forms.

After having viewed all the different, scattered strands that go into the making of the Geeta, it will be now opportune to dwell upon the composite view of **DHARM** that emerges from the scripture. It may be claimed without any impropriety that dharm, properties and conduct that enable a man to realize his Self, is the overriding concern of the Geeta. According to Krishn (2.16-29), the unreal never exists and the real is never without existence at any time. God alone is real, permanent, indestructible, changeless, and eternal, but he is beyond thought, imperceptible, and quite above the fluttering of mind. Action is the ,name of the mode by which a man attains to God after subduing his mind. Putting this mode into practice is dharm, which is a trust or obligation. As Krishn has told Arjun in the fortieth verse of Chapter 2 : "Since selfless action neither wears out the seed from which it sprang nor has any adverse consequence, even a partial observance of it liberates one from the dire terror of repeated birth and death." So the undertaking of this action is dharm.

This appointed action has been classified into four categories on the basis of the seekers' inherent ability. At the initial stage, when a man sets upon the way of seeking after a due understanding of his task, he is a Shudr. But he is elevated to the rank of a Vaishya when his hold upon the means gets steadier. At the third stage, the same worshipper is promoted to the yet higher status of a Kshatriya when he gains the ability to oppose the conflicts of nature. The awakening of true knowledge that is transmitted by the voice of God himself, and which bestows on one, the ability to rely upon that God and become like him, transmutes the seeker into a Brahmin.

Hence it is that Yageshwar Krishn lays down in the fortysixth verse of Chapter 18 that engaging in action that is in harmony with one's native disposition is swadharm. Though of an inferior merit, the discharge of one's natural obligation should be preferred. The undertaking of a deed of superior merit is, on the other hand, improper and injurious if it is attempted without cultivating the ability that is commensurate with it. Even losing one's life in the fulfillment of one's inborn calling is better, because the body is a mere garb and no one is really changed by putting on a different apparel. When taken up again, the spiritual exercise is resumed from the same point at which it was discontinued. Thus climbing from step to step, the seeker at last attains to the immortal state.

The same is re-emphasized in the forty-seventh verse of the concluding chapter, when it is said that a man attains to ultimate liberation by worshipping God well according to his inborn inclination. In other words, remembering and meditating on God by the appointed mode is dharm.

But who is the man entitled to this spiritual discipline called dharm? Who has the privilege of approaching it? Shedding light on the problem, Krishn tells Arjun that even the most degraded man is rendered

virtuous if he worships him (Krishn)- the one God-with intentness, and his Soul is then merged with God who is the ultimate reality and dharm. So, according to the Geeta, that man is pious who performs the appointed task in keeping with his innate property to realize God.

Arjun is counselled at last to forsake all his other obligations and seek refuge in Krishn. So that man who is wholly devoted to the one God is endowed with piety. To dedicate oneself thus to God is dharm. The process by which the Self is enabled to attain to the Supreme Being is dharm. The awareness, that comes to sages after their hunger for union with God has been quenched because of their achievement of the ultimate state, is the only reality in all of creation. So we have to seek refuge in these men of enlightenment and wisdom in order to learn how we can make our way along the path that leads to final bliss. That path is only one and embarking on it is dharm.

Dharm is an obligation-a sacred trust. It is propitious and the mind that applies itself to this enjoined task is also one and unified. (2.41) Offering the functions of the senses and the operations of the life-winds to the fire of yog-self-restraint-kindled by the knowledge of God is dharm. (4.27) When self-control is identical with the Soul, and the operations of breath and the senses are thoroughly stilled, the current which arouses passions and the current that bears one towards God merge into one in the Self. Realization of God is the sublime culmination of this spiritual process.

The **FELICITY** offered by the Geeta is its illumination of the hidden truth of God-for the enlightenment of all mankind. There are no schools that impart instruction in lust, anger, greed, and delusion to their pupils. And yet there are youngsters who are better-versed in these vices than even their elders. What can Krishn teach us in regard to this? There was a time when pupils were initiated into the Ved and trained in the martial skills of archery and wielding maces. But no one cares to learn

these things today because ours is an age of automatic machines and self-propelled weapons. What can Krishn say about these matters? What provisions for the external, physical life can he possibly make? In the olden days, yagya was performed to invoke rains, but today we do it by mechanical means. In the past crops were almost wholly dependent on rains, but now there is artificial irrigation and we have the much vaunted "Green Revolution." What can the Yogeshwar say about all this? That is why he has frankly admitted that bound and constrained by the properties of nature, the physical life of man grows and changes according to circumstance. It is these properties that shape the different forms of external life. Knowledge of the physical world has grown tremendously and bifurcated into numerous branches. But there is a reality that transcends all this physical knowledge. It is always there with every one of us, but unfortunately we are oblivious of it. We neither know it nor can recognize it. It is the memory, the awareness, of this sublime reality that slips from Arjun's mind, but he recovers it by listening devoutly to Krishn's sacred message that is enshrined in the Geeta. The memory that comes back to Arjun is the memory of God who dwells in the realm of every heart and is yet so far away. It is every man's aspiration to approach that Supreme Essence, but he does not know the way. How unfortunate it is that we know all other ways but are ignorant of this one, unique way that takes us to ultimate happiness? The shroud of nescience of not knowing, that envelops us is so thick that the mind fails to penetrate it and get at the truth. Conscious of the ignorance that lies like a dense mantle over men's minds, the Yogeshwar, knower of man's innermost secrets, has in his infinite grace illumined the hidden truth in the Geeta for the enlightenment of all of us. As for the language in which his teachings are enshrined, it is so simple, direct, and lucid that no reader can either misconstrue it or experience any difficulty in comprehending it. The way that Krishn has revealed for the attainment of

the ultimate essence is the Geeta's most precious and indeed inestimable gift for the good of all humanity. The Geeta embodies a spiritual precept that is complete in every respect. This precept is found in the Ved, too, and they are among the sublimest of holy books. The Upanishad are their abstract. And the Geeta, "Song of the Lord," embodies the essence of all of them.

Since a sequestered life, restraint of the senses, and constant reflection and meditation are essential requirements of the ordained action, it is often asked of what use the Geeta can be to **HOUSEHOLDERS**. That is like saying that the Geeta is only for ascetics-for men who have renounced the world and all. But this is not true. Although the Geeta is primarily for persons who tread the path of spiritual quest, it is also in good measure for those who aspire to step on to it. This song of revelation is for all men, and it is specially salutary for householders-for men and women who are rearing a family and struggling to support and sustain it, because such individuals stand at the point where action is commenced.

Krishn tells Arjun that the initial step taken in the undertaking of selfless action is never destroyed. Attempted in even a small measure, it at last provides liberation from the terror' of birth and death. Now, who besides an overburdened and harried householder is expected to act in a small measure? He has so little time to devote to the task. Arjun is told in the thirtysixth verse of Chapter 4 : "Even if you are the most heinous sinner, the ark of knowledge will carry you safely across all evils." (4.36) Now, who possibly is expected to be the greater sinner, the man who is incessantly absorbed in spiritual seeking or the man who only contemplates embarking on it? So the garhastya-order-the order of the householder-is the stage that marks the beginning of action. In Chapter 6, Arjun asks the lord: "What is the end, O Krishn, of the feeble worshipper whose inconstant mind has strayed away from selfless action

and who has, therefore, been deprived of perception which is the final outcome of yog?" Is it that this deluded, shelter-less man is dissipated like scattered clouds, deprived of both God-realization and worldly pleasures? Krishn then proceeds to assure his friend and disciple that even this irresolute man who digresses from yog is not destroyed, for one who has performed good deeds never comes to grief. With his sanskar, such a person is either born in the house of a noble man or admitted to the family of an enlightened yogi. Such a person is thus on both ways induced to worship and, treading this appointed path through several births, he or she finally achieves the ultimate state. All this is relevant to a householder more than to anyone else. Isn't a person in fact, re-born as a householder because of wandering from the Way of Selfless Action? And this accident of birth is what bestows on that individual an inclination towards spiritual seeking and worship. In this context Krishn further declares in the thirtieth verse of Chapter 9 : "Even if a man of the most depraved conduct worships incessantly, he is worthy of being regarded as a saint because he is a man of true resolve." Who can be more fallen, the man who is already absorbed in divine adoration or the man who has not yet been initiated into the process? Even women, Vaishya, and Shudr, who are said by the ignorant to be of inferior birth, Krishn promises in the thirty-second verse of the same chapter, attain to the Supreme goal by taking refuge in God. What is pledged here is thus for all mankind-Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and all others, men and women. Even persons of sinful conduct can achieve final emancipation by finding shelter under God. A householder is not essentially a sinful man. Moreover, the order to which he belongs is, as we have already seen, the starting point of the scripturally ordained action. Climbing ever higher, although step by step, the householder will also achieve the state of a yogi and become a part of the supreme

essence and, then, his form will be, as Yogeshwar Krishn says, like the form of God himself.

Knowledge derived from Geeta is the pure Manusmriti – Geeta appeared even before the original man Manu – *'इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्।' (४/१)* Arjun! I told about this indestructible happening to Sun at the beginning of time and Sun told it to Manu. Manu listened to it and carried it in his memory because what he heard could be carried only in Manu's smiriti (memory). Manu told the same thing to King Ikshwaku. The Rajarshis from Ikshwaku knew it and during this important period this indestructible happening disappeared from this earth. Initially there was a tradition of listening and memorizing. It was not even thought that it could be documented. Manu Maharaj carried it in his psychological memory and created the tradition of memory. Thus this knowledge derived from Geeta is the pure Manusmriti.

The Lord had imparted this knowledge to the Sun even before he gave it to Manu, so why don't we call it Suryasmriti? In fact the Sun is that part of the Light, the Almighty that is the creator of this universe. Lord Shri Krishna says, 'I ma the father of the ultimate life stream sperm, and the nature is the womb that nurtures it'. The Sun is the originator. Sun is that ultimate power of the Lord that designed the humans. It is not a personality and where the enlightened power created the humans the same power was transferred the knowledge based on Geeta that is it was transferred to the Sun. Sun told the same to his son Manu thus it is called Manusmriti. Sun is not a person, it is the source.

Lord Shri Krishna says – 'I am going to say that same ancient Yoga for you now. You are my beloved disciple, true friend. Arjun was intelligent, true worthy. He reeled out a chain of questions like you were born just; the Sun was born ages ago. How do I accept that 'You told this to the Sun'? He asked some twenty twenty-five questions of this type. By

the time Geeta came to conclusion all his questions were answered, at that juncture the Lord Himself raised the questions Arjun could not muster up and were in his benefit and clarified the same. At the end of it all the Lord said, ‘ Arjun! Did you listen to my advice in concentration? Was your ignorance raised out of desire has vanished? Arjun said,

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥१८/७३॥

Hey Lord, my desires have subsided. I have gotten memory. I have not only listened but I am carrying it as part of system now. I will abide by your orders, and will hold the war. He picked up his bow, warred, won, and established an empire of the pure dharma and in the form of a religious scripture that original Dharmashastra Geeta again came in circulation.

Geeta is source religious scripture. This is the Manusmriti that was embedded in memory by Arjuna. There is a reference to two Geeta in front of Manu – One gotten from the Father, the second, the Vedas which appeared in front of Manu. There was no third thing that appeared Manu’s time. Those days documentation was not a way, paper & pen were not common thus there was the tradition of listening to the knowledge and making it part of the memory. Manu Maharaj, the source f human kind, the first human gave the honor of shruti (listening) to Vedas and memory to Geeta.

Vedas appeared in front of Manu, listen to them, they are meant for listening. Even if you may forget them later onwards there is no harm but Geeta is smriti, you should always remember it. This is that heavenly psalm fro the humankind that will forever give you life, peace and everlasting prosperity.

The Lord said – Arjun! If you will not listen to my advice because of your ego you will cease to exist, that it the one who disrespects the

advices of Geeta will become extinct. In the last psalm of episode fifteen the Lord said (15.20) "इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ।" 'I have uttered the most confidential of the confidential science'. By learning it you will acquire all the knowledge and ultimate credit.' In the last two psalms of episode sixteen it is said, - "यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः।" 'The ones who shun these sciences by getting excited with the vices and pray other operations will not get happiness, prosperity and will neither reach abode.'

So Arjun, "तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ।" this is the standard science behind management of your tasks and untasks. Study it well and act accordingly. You will be my part, reach that indestructible position and will attain life forever and everlasting peace and prosperity.

Geeta is the Manusmriti and as per Lord Shri Krishna Geeta is the religious science, there is no other science, no other memory. He various memories practiced in society today is the fallback of forgetting Geeta. The memories are the solution for machinations of the royalties and a weapon to build walls in the society. They neither paint a correct picture of Manu's thoughts neither do they describe Manu's times. Original Manusmriti Geeta accepts One Lord the Almighty the Truth, and proposes being one with it but currently available about 164 memories do not even talk about the God nor they discuss the ways to reach the Almighty. They limit themselves only to get reservation in the heaven and encourage those who are not there. They don't ever even refer to Moksha.

The Geeta is for the pious hermit, for the householder, and FOR ALL MANKIND. Many a sage like Maharshi Patanjali has elucidated the mode, in isolation from questions of social order and organization, that begets the highest felicity. Yogeshwar Krishn also finds the way more

salutary. Also, his message is for only deserving pupils. He reminds Arjun time and again that he has imparted the knowledge to him because he is his loving devotee and because he (Krishn) wishes to do him good.

This knowledge is the most secret knowledge-secret because it is meant for only men of the required spiritual preparedness. So Arjun is at the end bidden that before he passes on this knowledge to another man he must wait, if the man is not a true devotee, until he is brought over to the ordained way. Observance of such a precaution in the imparting of this most mysterious knowledge is essential, for this knowledge is the one and only means of final salvation. And the Geeta is a systematic account, in Krishn's words, of this transcendental knowledge.

**SACRED BOOKS** are useful in the same way as monuments and places that remind us of the ideals and achievements of some departed sage. They tell us of the dynamic spiritual process which Yogeshwar Krishn calls the ordained action in order that we may know and be inclined to undertake it. In case we are overtaken by loss of remembrance sometimes, we go back to these works to refresh our memory. But these sacred books are of absolutely no avail if we just sprinkle grains of rice and sandal-paste on them and then relegate them to a high shelf. A noble work like the Geeta is a marker-a signthat directs us along the right path and provides support right up to the time when the destination is reached. We look up to holy books so that we may constantly advance towards the cherished goal. But after the heart has once seized it, the goal itself is transformed into a book. Veneration of noble memories is desirable, but a blind worship of them is deplorable.

As for the present exposition, it is called Yatharth Geeta because it is an attempt to elucidate the meaning of Krishn in its true perspective. Embodying the whole means of ultimate liberation, the Geeta is self-contained, There is not a single point in it that may engender any doubt.

But since it cannot be grasped on an intellectual plane, there may arise what only appear to be doubts. So if we fail to comprehend any part of the Geeta, we can resolve our doubts as did Arjun by sitting devoutly by a sage who has perceived and realized the essence.

**OM SHANTI ! SHANTI !! SHANTI !!!**

# An Appeal

This 'Yatharth Geeta' is intended to provide you with the noblest sermon made by Yogeshwar Sri Krishn in the 'SHREEMAD BHAGWAD GEETA: This contains the portrayal, by a sage, after attainment, of that Supreme Soul that abides within our hearts.

Attempting to use the Geeta with cynical perspectives is to be avoided, lest we may be cheated out of knowing our goals and the paths. By the devoted study of the Geeta, the entire human race stands to succeed in their efforts to gain well being. Even if they comprehend only a small portion of it, they are certain to attain the ultimate beatitude, because any progress made in this path, shall never be lost.

*- Swami Adgadanand*

## PREFACE OF EACH CHAPTER IN AUDIO CASSETTES

1. The GEETA, a complete message in itself, of reverence and dedication to one Supreme Spirit, is an open invitation for sacredness to all. Whether rich or poor, of noble birth or unknown parentage, a virtuous person or a sinner, a woman or a man, chaste or extremely sinful, residing anywhere in the universe all are entitled to gain entry in it. The Geeta specifically stresses on the upliftment of these embroiled or caught up in the bondage of worldly affairs towards an ennobling and liberating spiritual path, whereas those who are virtuous are already engaged in the ordained action and meditation. That precious and universal teaching is presented herein.

2. Scriptures are created with two main objectives. One is to protect the social order and the culture, in which the people could follow the footsteps of their noble ancestors. The second is to ensure that people can gain ultimate, eternal peace.

   Such scriptures as the Ramayan, the Bible, the Quran, and so on, deal with both these aspects. But, because of the material viewpoints held by most people, they tend to adhere only to those that are of immediate social use. In the spiritual texts, also, we find many references to useful social practices, confirming their relevance. Therefore, Sage Ved Vyas, while writing the Mahabharat, the epic within which the Geeta is an inherent part, had clearly referred to social as well as spiritual matters. However, in the Geeta itself, there is not a single verse that is concerned with the sustenance of physical life or the propagation of social or religious conventions, rites or customs. This was to

ensure that people should not mix up dogmas into something, which is meant for universal and timeless well-being. This divine Geeta is presented exclusively in terms of timeless spiritual roots and concepts.

3. The Geeta was never intended for any specific individual, any specific caste, religion, path, place, time or for any conventional culture. It is a universal and eternal spiritual treatise. It is enduringly and most relevant to every nation, every religion, every living being. In fact, it is meant for everyone, everywhere. The Geeta is a scripture that is meant for the entire human race as a spiritual textbook.

   Is it not a great honour and blessing for each of us then, that this Geeta can be our own personal, spiritual textbook?

4. The most venerable Bhagwan Mahavir, the founder of the Jain religion, as well as his contemporary Bhagwan Buddh, both of whom were completely God-realized, each in their separate teachings reflected the essential message of the Geeta to the people in folk languages.

   “The Soul alone is the truth, and Self-realization may be attained with total restraining of the mind and senses’. This is the essential message conveyed by the Geeta.

   When Lord Buddh stated that the same essence alone is universal and eternal, he reinforced this essential teaching of the Geeta.

   Not only such a teaching from Lord Buddh, but whatever essence has been professed as universal teachings in the name of religion, or spirituality such as One Universal God, Prayer, Repentance, Penance and so on, are all teachings found to be contained within the Geeta itself, the original seed scripture of mankind. Here, then, in YATHARTH GEETA, these same

lessons, coming straight from the spoken words of Swami Shree Adgadanand, are being presented to the world at large in the form of audio cassettes, so that the whole human race can benefit from this universal wisdom.

5. Among the folktales of India, there is a story that Aristotle- one of the great Greek philosopher and men of wisdom like Socrates had instructed Alexander the Great to bring back with him from India, a country that was well-known for its spiritual masters, a copy of the Shreemad Bhagwad GEETA as the guru-like embodiment of the spiritual knowledge of the accomplished sages.

   The essential concept of one single God as the Ultimate Reality taught in the GEETA, has been propagated in different languages at different times around the world by such "great masters as Moses, Jesus and numerous Sufi Saints also. Due to language and cultural differences, it can appear that the teachings of great masters are differentiated- but indeed, their essence is identical to the wisdom conveyed by Krishn to Arjun in the GEETA. As such the GEETA is indisputably a spiritual textbook for the entire human race.

   By presenting the essence of YATHARTH GEETA, Swami Adgadanandji has made an invaluable contribution to all of mankind. The transformation of this text into the form of audio cassettes has been done by the courtesy of Sri Jitenbhai.

6. Every religion all over the world, can be seen as the distant echo of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta. By listening to the lessons conveyed by Swami Shree Adgadanandji in the 'YATHARTH GEETA', Sri Jitenbhai, who was born in the Jain religion, decided that those lessons must be made popular through audio cassettes. Such a decision came out of a realization that the

essence of the GEETA'S teachings has found its place within the lessons throughout history taught by accomplished teachers such as Mahavir, Gautam Buddh, Nanak, Kabir and others. These cassettes of the Geeta are being presented for Self-realisation for seekers everywhere.

Not only such a teaching from Lord Buddh, but whatever essence has been professed as universal teachings in the name of religion, or spirituality such as One Universal God, Prayer, Repentance, Penance and so on, are all teachings found to be contained within the Geeta itself, the original seed scripture of mankind. Here, then, in YATHARTH GEETA, these same lessons, coming straight from the spoken words of Swami Shree Adgadanand, are being presented to the world at large in the form of audio cassettes, so that the whole human race can benefit from this universal wisdom.

7. At the time when the Geeta originated, thousands of years ago, mankind did not learn to identify itself through the separate, different religions, which evolved subsequently, but through such universally agreed upon sacred scripture and holy books as the Ved and the Upanishad in India. In those days, there was only one spiritual treatise that was acknowledged as containing the essence of all Upanishads, the SHREEMAD BHAGWAD GEETA, literally translated, the "Song of God". In this sense, the Geeta is an essential treatise- that is, one containing the essence- for gaining deliverance and prosperity.

When compared to reading scripture for learning, it is always more profitable to listen to it. Because of the clear pronunciation and intonation, listening to the spoken text lends itself to better concentration and comprehension. This is the essential purpose

behind presenting the Yatharth Geeta, the Geeta in its True Perspective, through audio cassettes.

By listening to these audiocassettes, even our children can benefit by absorbing the noble culture of the Supreme Being. The atmosphere surrounding each of our own households shall reverberate with the spiritual echo of the “Bhagwad Geeta”, the “Celestial Song”, like a sacred grove.

8. That home where God is not being discussed is a cemetery. In today’s world- even though they do have some inclination towards Self-realization in the Supreme Spirit, most people feel themselves unable to take time out to perform worship and meditation. In such a situation, if the message of the Geeta can reach out to every nook and corner of the world, it shall sow the seeds for universal well-being, peace, and prosperity. The divine words of God shall, through these cassettes, deliver the divine message of God contained in the “Bhagwad Geeta”, which translates in English as the “Song of God” or the “Song Celestial”. And this is the very essence of a worshipful foundation for the liberation and ultimate happiness of all beings.

9. We make sure that our children are well educated so that they shall be inculcated with noble culture. People tend to believe that noble culture is that which shall ensure a decent livelihood and solve the problems of daily living. Very few, hardly anyone, has their attention turned towards God. Many people even have sufficient material wealth that they perceive no need at all for calling upon God (as the noble Arjun did in the Geeta to his friend and charioteer, the accomplished sage Krishn). In the end, though, all material wealth and seeming security is perishable. At the time of death, even though they were attached to those things, people still have to leave them behind. Given this

undisputed reality, the only path open to any of us is to understand during our lifetime, while we are still in our body, the ways to move towards the Supreme Being. This is the essential purpose that is being transmitted through these audio cassettes of Yatharth Geeta.

10. Whatever religions and religious sects exit in this world, were all formed in the name of some enlightened soul by some group of dedicated followers. The secluded spots that the noble sage had chosen for his meditation in the later years, have now become pilgrimage centres, ashrams, monasteries, temples and churches, where in the name of those sages and for earning their living, people engage themselves in various practices, ranging from simple livelihood to extreme luxury. Accomplished sages are always put on pedestal, but no one can attain the stage of accomplishment simply by putting themselves on a pedestal or being put there by devotees. That is the reason, that dharm has always been the field of an authentically realised sage, a true, accomplished teacher.

The GEETA, the "Song Celestial" in Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, is undoubtedly a scripture. It is the actual teaching of the Supreme Spirit as manifested through the personage of Yogeshwar Lord Sri Krishn, a realized sage and accomplished teacher. These eternal truths and the true essence of the same sacred verses of the timeless dialogue between the accomplished teacher, Krishn, and the devoted and noble-hearted spiritual seeker, Arjun, are being relayed to you in their pure form and innate clarity through these audio cassettes of Yatharth Geeta.

**|| OM ||**

This Geeta contains the complete description of the dynamic meditational system of the research that gives attainment to the self, which is the complete spirituality of India and also the basic source of the prevailing religions of the whole world. It further concludes that the Supreme Being is one, the action to attain is one, the grace is one and the result, too is one and that is the vision of the Supreme Being, attainment of godliness and eternal life. Refer "***Yatharth Geeta***".